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THE BIBLE

ITS ORIGIN, ITS SIGNIFICANCE, AND ITS ABIDING WORTH

THE BIBLE

ITS ORIGIN, ITS SIGNIFICANCE, AND ITS ABIDING WORTH

By

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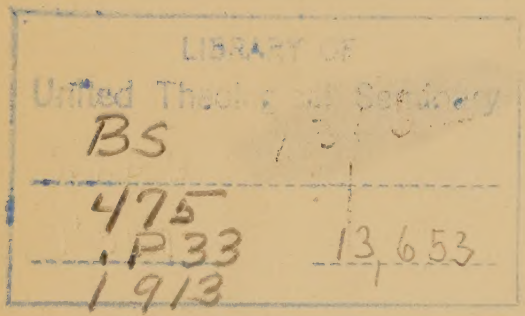
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TO MY WIFE

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

AFFECTIONATELY COMMEMORATING

TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF WEDDED LIFE.

PREFACE

THIS volume has been written in the hope that it may prove helpful in the present perplexity. The Bible has irretrievably lost the place once accorded to it by the consent of Christendom, and this is coming to be realized by an ever-increasing number. Not criticism alone, nor even chiefly, has been responsible for the change; combined advance from several sides has made the old position untenable. It is a momentous change and might easily prove tragic. The retribution for extravagant claims is apt to be the repudiation of all claims whatsoever. But those who accept the truth of Christianity must find in Scripture the classical documents of their religion. To plead for the acceptance of our faith is no part of the present enterprise; for what the author has to say on this theme he would refer the reader to his volume, *Christianity: Its Nature and Its Truth*, to which this work is intended to be a companion. But while in many ways the defence of the Bible has been lightened by the earlier work, he has felt that some statement of the attitude he has adopted towards Scripture was its necessary completion.

It is the writer's conviction that while a position injudiciously selected can be no longer held, the defenders of the Bible have been driven to ground from which they will not easily be dislodged. If some claims made for it cannot be sustained, other claims, and those the most vital, may be substantiated. The abandonment of the indefensible has concentrated at-

tention on qualities in the literature which have been neglected to our impoverishment. If the view advocated in this volume is accepted, the Bible will mean to us not less but far more, since much that on the older view appeared obsolete is now seen to possess an abiding worth, much that might well be deemed irrelevant is realized to be indispensable to the true estimate of Scripture as an organic whole. Nor is it merely that the newer view has reclaimed much for us of which the older could make little or no profitable use. Its greatest service has been in its shifting of the emphasis from the secondary to the primary qualities of the Bible. It has transformed the conception of revelation by its adoption of the scientific method. The formulation of a theory has been controlled by close observation of the actual phenomena. It has thus rendered a service to apologetics by placing the student of Scripture at the right point of view and thus saving him from approaching it with expectations it was never designed to satisfy. But yet more important has been the service it has rendered in showing us what revelation is, and in what relation it stands to the Bible. We have come to see that revelation was a process in history and in experience ; working at first slowly and almost imperceptibly because its sphere was co-extensive with a whole nation, but, as it moved to higher levels, selecting for its vehicle the choicer spirits, through whose experience it might be apprehended and then conveyed to the people as a whole. It found its most congenial expression not in word but in deed ; national life and individual experience, rather than doctrine or ethics, were the chosen field of the Spirit's operation. And its content was not in the first place truth about God or precepts on conduct ; it was God Himself, who came into direct contact with man, and in this intense,

exceptional action disclosed Himself as the living, holy, gracious and redeeming God, and became the possession of His people and their highest good. This action of God then was the revelation, in which He unveiled Himself to His people, slowly as they could bear it, and imparted Himself to them, gradually as they gained the power and capacity to receive Him. But more than this was needed; the meaning of the revelation had to be made plain. Interpreters were therefore chosen, who were made aware of it so far as it was fitting at the time, and they communicated it to their fellows. Nor yet was this enough, for the revelation and its interpretation involved a record if they were to become the abiding possession of our race. This we have in the Bible, which is not the revelation itself but its record, made by men who under the Spirit's impulse created a literature which adequately preserved what it was essential for us to know. In each of the three processes, in revelation, interpretation, and the making of the record, the human and the Divine interpenetrated. No sharp definition of their mutual adjustment, no apportionment of their respective shares in the product, can be given beforehand as something for which we have a right to stipulate; nor yet can it be given after the closest scrutiny of the product itself. It is clear, however, that the human factor played a much larger part than we should naturally have anticipated, and that such Divine guidance as was granted to the writers was tolerant of human error and imperfection to a degree that can hardly fail to surprise us. Yet the Bible in actual practice does its work with an efficiency which its limitations do little to impair.

It is the author's hope that this book may be found by many reassuring in the best sense of the term. An old foundation on which multitudes have rested

could not with a light heart be pronounced insecure, were he not able to point them to higher ground and the solid rock. If it should seem that the uncertainties which surround the Bible are only too pertinaciously pushed home, it is not simply that he does not wish to fail in candour, but that only so can an opening be made for the emancipating truth. In particular he regrets that so much space has been claimed for the consideration of criticism. He has never had more than a lukewarm interest in it for its own sake. But, as the book explains at length, criticism is not simply legitimate but imperative, when the revelation recorded in the documents has been given through history.

So far as the account of criticism goes the author has simply summarized well-known conclusions. He sees no reason to believe that the traditional views as to the Old Testament are likely to be rehabilitated, nor does he feel any inclination to take the wandering stars of the astral theory for his guides. In the study of the New Testament he has reached more conservative results than many will approve, but without, as he trusts, any disloyalty to sound principles of criticism. In the later part of the book the really important questions are discussed. Here the author is conscious of a special debt to the writings of Robertson Smith for the general view of what the Bible is. This was incurred now many years ago, but while the literature on the criticism, the interpretation, and the theology of Scripture has been studied as opportunity has permitted, the author deliberately left even the better known books on the nature of revelation, inspiration, and Scripture unread, that he might so far as possible form an independent and first-hand opinion. On taking up some of these books recently, he found that they

added little to the conclusions he had reached. He has, of course, learnt much from the detailed study of Scripture itself, but much has become clearer as he has had to work out the implications of his view, when expounding it to his students or popular audiences, and especially when answering questions or rebutting objections.

It is his experience in the lecture-room that accounts for what to some may seem a defect. There may appear to be an undue amount of repetition in the book. But it has been quite deliberate. Experience has repeatedly shown that after this theory of the Bible has been expounded, as fully, as forcibly, and as lucidly as possible, questions have been asked which implied that the older view had not been left behind. It is one thing to have learnt a theory, another to have assimilated it. After an old attitude has been formally abandoned, its influence often lives on but little abated. It is only by approaching it from different sides, by stating and restating it, in new contexts and with fresh expression, that one can hope to secure in many instances some real, if all too feeble, appropriation of a novel point of view.

Some topics which might naturally have been discussed, have been excluded or but slightly handled, because they had been dealt with in the volume on *Christianity*, or one of the author's Biblical works. Footnotes might have been much more liberally added, in defence or elucidation of the statements in the text, but it seemed better not to increase the length of the book, or repel the readers for whom it is designed by too technical a character. A full analysis of the contents has been provided to aid those readers who are unfamiliar with the subject.

Part of the earlier portion of the book was published

in *The Sunday Strand*. The series of articles was broken off abruptly owing to the absorption of that excellent and admirably edited magazine in a woman's journal, for which such a theme was inappropriate. The articles have been revised and expanded, and much of the volume now appears in print for the first time. The author tenders his cordial thanks to the editors of *The Contemporary Review* and *The Interpreter* for permission to use articles contributed to these journals.

September, 1913.

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CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION

Our theme is the Bible and we best approach it through a description and estimate of the attitude of our own age towards it. But since the Christian religion and its sacred books are so vitally connected that the influences which affect the one inevitably act upon the other, we must touch upon the general religious situation in which the attitude to the Bible is but part of a larger whole, and consider by what methods and in what temper we ought to handle it. It is probably not seriously questioned that there is a very widespread indifference to religion and not a little alienation from all forms of organized Christianity.

One of the most ominous signs in the life of the Churches at the present time is the ignorance of Scripture which meets us on every hand. The causes for this are probably not difficult to discover. In the first place, there is the great change which has come over our social conditions. The pressure of business and professional life has made daily family worship extremely difficult. I need not dwell on the way in which these conditions operate—they will be only too familiar to most of my readers—but the inevitable consequence has been that one very effective means of familiarizing children and young people with the actual text of Scripture has been largely taken from us.

In the next place we have the widespread collapse of earlier sanctities and theological beliefs. The secularization of life has gone on apace. In innumerable lives religion is being steadily pushed into the background, and whereas in earlier days public opinion was steadily hostile to such relaxation in the standard either of conduct or belief, nowadays the tone of society is quite friendly to those who set old-fashioned conventions at defiance. And it is not merely those who wish to throw off irksome restrictions who have turned away from religion. There are multitudes—and their numbers seem likely to increase—who believe that Christianity will soon be classed with stages of thought and feeling we have outgrown. And where that feeling prevails it is inevitable that the Bible should fall into disuse. It may still be read as great literature, but it is only a remnant who will be attracted to it for this. The vast majority will either read the Bible as containing a Divine revelation, or they will not read it at all. Another reason for the neglect of the Bible is due to the impression that it is a dull book. Those who used to read it conscientiously in earlier days did so often as a duty rather than as a delight ; and nowadays, when light, bright, and frothy literature—if literature much of it can be called—is all the food on which the great masses of people nourish their intellects, what wonder if from this tasty confectionery they turn with wry faces to the Bread of Life ? And where the sense of duty has disappeared they are naturally tempted to neglect it altogether.

The consequences of this neglect are disastrous. It is unquestionable that neglect of the Bible is coincident with a lowered spiritual vitality. Even those who are members of the Church, and take their profession with some measure of seriousness, are too often

tempted to imagine that their spiritual growth will largely take care of itself. At any rate, they are not keen and eager in their efforts to foster it, hence their Bible reading tends to become perfunctory. Their 'daily portion,' if they have one, is something to be got through rather than embraced as a precious opportunity of storing new force and winning new insight. And if the individual life suffers, so also does the collective. The preacher is largely paralysed when his people have given up the habit of Bible study. Allusions which would otherwise be plain fall on uncomprehending ears. The context in which his message is set they cannot mentally supply as they listen, and thus the force of his appeal is broken and the fulness of his message largely missed. And more and more the people are at the preacher's mercy. They cannot check his utterances with the same readiness and confidence as before, because they have never acquired the standard by which to test the validity of his message.

But it may be less readily admitted that we are confronted with a collapse of faith on a considerable and increasing scale. Yet this is well-nigh as certain. Our difficulty is partly one of atmosphere; in the general tone and attitude of the society in which we move the faith of many is in danger of asphyxiation. Indeed it would be strange were it otherwise. There is an energetic and skilfully conducted propaganda of unbelief, promoted by men who acknowledge no God, no freewill, no sin, no redemption, who cast doubt on the very existence of Jesus, and are determined to leave no stone unturned that they may extirpate a belief in the religion of which He is the foundation. The land has been flooded with cheap publications, skilfully designed to further the emancipating work.

The most sacred problems are ventilated in our leading reviews and magazines, they are discussed in the workshop, the factory, and the office. If we could carry away our young people to an island, establish a strict censorship of the press, and let nothing reach them till it had been carefully filtered, then we might hope to keep them in a state of innocence. But any one who is living in the full tide of modern life, or is even watching it intelligently and with knowledge as it rushes by him, knows that our young people cannot be protected in this way. They are bound to hear of these things, and if we do not tell them others will. Accordingly, if concealment were desirable, and it is not desirable, it would be completely impracticable.

And within the Church itself there is an uncertainty even on the most vital questions of theology, the vague sense that foundations are tottering and that old landmarks are sinking below the surface. The younger people in particular are more and more coming to recognise that the old orthodoxy is impossible, but they do not know how much must be surrendered, nor what should be put in its place. In the general unsettlement which is so characteristic of our time it is not wonderful if many feel that the whole religious territory has been converted into a quivering morass. 'Where are we to find a foothold,' they cry, 'now that the solid rock has been irretrievably broken up? In the old days everything was so plain and certain. We had a Bible unquestioned from cover to cover, we believed that from Genesis to Revelation it was all the infallible word of God. Now criticism has come and shown us that we were wrong in our views of authorship and date, that the history is in many places very uncertain, and that much would have to be surrendered on which we had stayed

our faith and comforted our souls. Comparative Religion has demonstrated that much which we thought peculiar to the religion of Israel was shared by nations all over the world. Science and archæology have attested the antiquity of man and his kinship with the lower creation, and have revealed him to us as a mere ephemeral creature on one of the most insignificant of worlds.' 'What,' they ask in bewilderment, 'can we still believe?' Moreover our age is impatient of theology, with its abstractions and refinements, its remoteness from common affairs, and the urgent business of practical life. What has made the cry 'Back to Christ' so popular with many is the implication 'Away from Paul' which they read into it. The reign of theology, we are told, is over: the pulpit must direct its attention to the moral and social questions which loom larger and larger before us, or even descend into the arena of political and economic controversy. The preacher must turn his eyes from eternity to time, to the stern realities of our modern civilization, and give a lead to the people in solving the problems that baffle them. For those who are deaf to such a summons Democracy, it is said, has no use.

And this grave disquiet or cool indifference, this scornful impatience or settled hate, centre inevitably on the Bible. I have touched already on some of the causes for this change of attitude, since they are largely the same as those which have tended to discredit Christianity in the eyes of many.

I might allude first of all to the change which has come over our whole conception of the universe. We no longer live in the days of the Ptolemaic theory when the earth was regarded as stationary and conceived as a circular plane, with heaven above the

solid firmament not so very far away, and with the under-world the home of the dead, or as later conceived the abode of lost spirits, in the dark recesses underground. The coming of the Copernican theory has meant a change in our general view of the universe, which has not left our theological systems unaffected, while the Bible is supposed to be discredited by its adhesion to an antiquated theory of the universe.

Even more serious is the blow which modern science is thought to have struck at the authority of Scripture. First geology and then the theory of evolution were imagined to have disposed of the claims made on behalf of the Bible with its six days' scheme and its doctrine of special creation and the brief period that it allows for the existence of man on this planet. And in this conflict with the Bible the physical and biological sciences have been reinforced by archæology. We have now evidence not simply for the antiquity of man but for the development of an elaborate civilization at a period earlier than that to which the Biblical chronology assigns the creation of the human race. I pass over other points in the quarrel, such as the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day, or the questions raised touching the historical character of the Deluge. And here in particular it is thought that the advance of these sciences has hit Christianity in a vital place. The Pauline theology, we are told, is built on the assumption that the third chapter of Genesis contains a record of literal fact, and this assumption has now been proved to be incorrect.

Another influence that has tended to undermine the authority of the Bible has been Comparative Religion. The patient and sympathetic study which has been devoted by a large number of able scholars

to the exposition of non-Christian religions has disclosed many very striking parallels with ideas that were formerly regarded as exclusively Biblical, yet which were not derived from the Bible, but were probably, in many instances, chronologically earlier.

And while the assaults delivered from these various quarters have seemed to make many a breach in the walls, those within the camp have appeared to join hands with the assailants from without. The plaintive cry goes up that it is Christian scholars themselves who are making the most damaging attacks upon Scripture, compared with which those that are delivered from the side of physical science and archæology are comparatively insignificant. In the first place, we have the very rigorous criticism which has been brought to bear upon Scripture. There has been the Lower Criticism which has taught us that the text both of the Old and the New Testament is in a very defective and insecure condition. Even so mild an event as the publication of the Revised Version of the New Testament must have come home to many with a sense of shock. It was not a matter simply of translation, though it was disagreeable to learn that much which had passed for centuries as a faithful reproduction of God's Word was really mistranslation of it. But the mistakes of King James's translators could not reasonably be held to affect the quality of the inspired original. The publication of the Revised Version, however, revealed to many that the Greek text was itself in many instances uncertain, so that those who had taken refuge from the blunders of translators in the infallibility of the original, were now hard put to it to say what was and what was not the real utterance of the Holy Spirit. Of course those who were in any real sense Bible stu-

dents had been long aware of these facts, but it was otherwise with many devout readers of the Bible. And if this was the case with the New Testament what were we to say about the Old? It is true that here matters looked somewhat better on the surface, for the alterations of the text in the Revised Version were much slighter than in the case of the New Testament. But no sooner did the reader look below the surface than he found cause to change his opinion. For while in the New Testament the enormous number of various readings seemed at first sight to leave the reader in hopeless uncertainty as to the original, he soon realized that this was a ground of congratulation. Where the evidence was so abundant it was not likely that the true text had often been lost, and in the hands of the skilled critic it provided plentiful material for recovery of the original. But in the Old Testament the student learned to his dismay, that the uniformity of our Hebrew manuscripts in presenting one type of text left the original text in a condition of great uncertainty, and that in many instances he had to regard it as irrecoverably lost, though in other cases he might hope to restore it by the help of the Septuagint and the rest of the Versions.

But if the Lower or Textual Criticism created uneasiness, the effect of the Higher Criticism was even more disturbing. It examined the traditional views as to the dates of the Biblical books, frequently denied them to the authors for whom tradition had claimed them, analysed them into earlier documents, detected a large number of later insertions and reduced, as it seemed, to a polychrome patchwork what had been regarded as a beautiful and artistic unity.

But this was by no means all. For in the train of the Lower and Higher Criticism there came Historical

Criticism. Not only was the text discovered to be often incorrectly transmitted, not only were traditional views as to authorship and structure roughly shattered, but the history itself was declared to be very dubious in its character. Particularly this was the case with the earlier history of mankind, though here there had been much to prepare the way. But it was by no means confined to that dim period. Much that seemed to lie in the clear daylight was called in question, until the reader began to wonder whether the knife of a surgical criticism would cut the very vitals from Biblical history.

Nor yet was this all. The older way of reading the Bible was to look at it as presenting a homogeneous system of doctrine. No doubt it was realized that there was a difference both in the clearness and in the fulness with which the great truths of revelation were set forth. In the earlier stages they might be vaguely hinted or darkly shadowed forth in type and symbol, taught by ritual acts, enshrined in obscure prophecy. But it was always held that the same truth was there and that these forms were a disguise deliberately chosen for His own wise purpose by the Holy Spirit. And when the clearer daylight dawned, in which the truth could be plainly revealed and men were able to receive it, then the different writers, though varying in mode of expression and presentation, yet all uttered the same harmonious Gospel. Moreover, it was now possible for the reader to go back to the earlier writings, and with the clue he had in his hands discover the Gospel in them. If, for example, he wished to understand the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, he would find valuable material in the laws on priesthood and sacrifice in the legislation of Moses. But now there has arisen a new science of

Biblical Theology. This is concerned with tracing the historical development of the religion of Israel and early Christianity, and with reconstructing the theological systems of individual writers. And thus, instead of uniformity, we get diversity; in place of a single system we have a multitude of individual systems, or fragments of systems, and these often, it is said, divergent. Where, then, it may be asked, is the old sense of security with which the simple Bible reader could turn to any part of the sacred volume assured that what he read in one writer was harmonious with what he might read in another? And this science has brought a new problem in its demonstration that much, which had been regarded as directly due to the special inspiration accorded to the Biblical writers, was really taken over by them from a foreign source.

Another difficulty is that occasioned by elements in Scripture which are felt to be morally objectionable. These have been the familiar stock-in-trade of the secularist lecturer, who has delivered many a telling attack on the morality of Bible heroes or uttered a scathing condemnation of the wars of extermination which Israel undertook at the explicit command of God. Some of the ethical principles of the Bible appear to be objectionable in themselves, and in the light of our modern culture and ethical refinement they seem to belong to a stage which our better civilization has left behind.

Such, then, I take to be some of the main causes that have tended to discredit the Bible in the eyes of many, and to these we must add the wider objections which many entertain to the Christian religion as a whole, in which the Bible is naturally included. With the latter I am not now specially concerned, since I have dealt with them in my volume *Christianity: Its*

Nature and Its Truth. But, if we leave these out of account, are we able to rehabilitate the Bible and give a reason for our conviction that it still rightly holds its pre-eminent place in the literature of the world? It is my own belief that we can still make this claim for it. But it is one thing to make a claim and another to make it good. In what temper and by what methods are we to defend our position?

CHAPTER II

THE METHOD AND TEMPER OF THE APOLOGIST

It is an urgent question how we may most wisely meet the attack on our religion. It is not possible to guard people from a knowledge of it, and were it possible such protection would be mischievous.

Were we in the Garden of Eden itself the serpent would not be kept out of it. Are we then to shut our eyes and ears to the doubt that surges about us on every hand? It is futile, but it is far worse than futile. What could make a more fatal impression on the candid and open-minded than the conviction that we were deliberately suppressing our knowledge of the actual conditions? Are we to send those away who are looking for leadership and guidance, disheartened at our silence and contemptuous of our cowardice? How can they trust us if we refuse to help them to a sure foothold? With the best we can do for them their case may be difficult. Multitudes, especially of young people, feel that they have no firm foothold; the ground quivers with every step they take. It is no easy task to restore confidence, to lead them to solid rock. The arguments against Christianity can be put in lucid, compact, and telling form; whereas it is by no means so easy to answer them with replies equally lucid, compact, and telling. We are all well aware that it is quite easy for the simple to ask questions which the wisest would find it hard to solve. Difficulties may

be stated in a few sentences, which only an elaborate discussion could remove. Those who have been trained in physical science, with its rigorous demonstrations, often fail to appreciate the validity of the methods, which alone are open to the historian or the philosopher. The narrowness of outlook, which constant preoccupation with material things brings with it, tends to make them impatient of what cannot be measured or weighed, or made the subject of some experiment. It is all the more necessary to arm our young people beforehand with that which will keep them steady before the attack.

The task of investigating the grounds on which Christianity rests is one from which the great multitude of believers is exempt. They may make an effective but hardly a fundamental defence of their faith. If a Protestant Christian who was no expert in Apologetics were approached by one in quest of the true religion, how would he deal with him?

He might begin by telling him that the true religion was undoubtedly some form of Protestant Christianity. But our inquirer is not in the least moved by assertions. He knows quite well that other types of Christianity and other religions than the Christian are just as fervently believed by their devotees to be the only true religion. He will say, 'How am I to choose where the competing voices are so many? If I ask for the genuine Christianity am I to find it in Rome or Canterbury, in Geneva or Epworth? Why should I accept your statement that Christianity is to be preferred to other religions? Buddhist and Brahmin, Jew and Mohammedan, all as firmly believe that theirs is the only right way. You are a Christian simply because you were brought up in that form of religion. Had you been born in a Buddhist or Mohammedan family, you would have taken your religion from your parents

with just the same docility, and been as sure as you are now that your religion was the only true one.' Here, however, the Christian might interrupt him. He would very likely say, ' I was born in a Christian country and thus received a natural bias towards Christianity ; but my faith in the peerless excellence of my religion is not simply faith at second hand, it is something I have tested in my own experience, and experience has proved it to me to be true.' Now I think that here the Christian has really strong ground under his feet. What he at first accepted on the authority of others, has been guaranteed to him by his own experience. His experience of Christianity is something out of which he will not be easily argued. Nevertheless, I do not see how this can in the nature of the case have the same value for another as it has for himself. It is incommunicable in its very nature. It can be described to a certain extent, but it cannot carry with it to the mind of another the same consciousness of certainty.

Besides, while first-hand experience must receive its full weight in our ultimate verdict, we must remember that it is not the only factor to be taken into account. And in addition to this we need to determine carefully just how much it proves when the fullest weight is attached to it. In other words, we have to discriminate, when we are arguing back from the proved worth of the Gospel or of Scripture to the qualities in which this worth resides. It by no means follows, if experience attests their unique value, that we must without more ado accept the old-fashioned way of accounting for it. Rather we should put to ourselves the question, ' What precisely does the kind of experience they give me, warrant me in believing as to the characteristics they possess ? ' Moreover, there is another difficulty which I have always felt strongly

about the argument from Christian experience. That experience is a very composite product. What seems to the subject of it a single white ray of conviction, splendid and indivisible, breaks up under analysis into its component colours. Into it there have entered elements derived from earlier training, from the home and the school, or intimacy with friends, from Scripture, from sermons, from books, from conversations on religion, from the soul's own brooding, and from all that atmosphere of religious thought and emotion, which is none the less potent in shaping our character and convictions, that for the most part we are unconscious of its influence upon us. I neither say nor think that these are all the elements which enter into the Christian consciousness. Nor yet do I believe that adding all of them together would produce an equivalent to the experience itself. In the creation of the Christian consciousness there has been the direct action of the living God. But He has not created it out of nothing, He has rather filled elements already existing with His transforming energy, or to use my earlier metaphor, He has blended the separate colours into one white shaft of radiant certainty. So much I believe as a Christian; but the very fact that we can trace back the elements of experience into their separate existence makes it difficult to rely on such an argument as this in discussion with one who is not himself a Christian. He may be deeply impressed by the confident witness-bearing of the Christian, in some cases he may even be won by it; but the fact that the experience to which appeal is made is composite in character will quite probably lead him to the conclusion that it may be fully accounted for by the simple addition of its parts. 'You,' he might say, 'claim to be certain that your religion is true, but

the adherents of other religions are also quite certain. Your argument is good for yourself, but obviously I want something stronger to convince me.' (See Chap. XXIII.)

Possibly the Christian might then urge the actual results achieved. He would point to lives that have been transformed by the power of the Gospel, to the triumphs of missionary or evangelistic enterprise. And here again I think that he would be on strong ground. He could say, 'See how these people, who were the despair of the society in which they lived, whom nothing could reform or restrain, have been won by the power of the Gospel and are sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind.' This is certainly one of the most impressive arguments for Christianity. A great revival is in itself a tremendous piece of apologetic. If such preaching rests on a fiction, how do you account for its real results? Yet, while this argument must always appeal strongly to a large class of minds, there are many whom it would be far from satisfying. They might urge that what we see is to be accounted for simply as the result of a great upheaval of religious emotion. It is well known that one of the strongest passions in human nature is the religious. They will argue that similar transformations have been produced in other cases under the stress of emotion, sometimes not of a religious character at all, and when religious, not necessarily Christian. All that is strictly proved by such incidents, they will say, is that where religious emotion is powerfully excited certain permanent changes in disposition do seem often to take place, but similar changes, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse, take place when other passions are powerfully stimulated, for example, love or patriotism, vindictive-

ness or hate. A man may be redeemed by his love for a woman from a career of vice, or from selfish pleasure by enthusiasm for his country. Can we legitimately argue back, they ask, to a supernatural cause at work, or infer the truth of a religion which so powerfully stimulates the corresponding emotion? Moreover, they may argue that if we are to judge the truth of religion by its fruits, we ought not to overlook the evil as well as the good. Naturally we regard these evil results as due to perversions of Christianity, not to Christianity itself, though I fear we are not always so careful in our judgment of religions other than our own. Nevertheless the anxious inquirer cannot be expected to discriminate in this way. He will say, 'You have tried Christianity for more than eighteen centuries, but look at your Christian civilization.'

Perhaps the Christian will now fall back on the argument that he believes Christianity to be true, because he finds it in the Bible. The difficulty which our inquirer might feel in admitting the cogency of this argument is that he needs first of all that the authority of the Bible should be proved to him. He will urge that the claim which even the most ardent believer in verbal inspiration makes for the Christian Scriptures is far short of the claim made by the Brahmin for the Vedas, or by the Mohammedan for the Koran. How, once more, are we to discriminate? And he will say further, 'Even if I grant all you affirm about the Bible, yet among the many competing sects that appeal to it, how am I to decide which interprets it most truly? Each finds its own doctrine in the Bible. Rome says that the Bible is her book, and she alone possesses the right to interpret it. The Protestant finds his creed in the Bible, and dissents from

Romanism because that system seems in conflict with it.' Besides, will he not urge with some force, 'You ask me to accept Christianity, but when I say, Why should I accept it? you say, Because it is in the Bible. In other words, I find it hard to accept one thing, and you try to make it easier for me by telling me that I must accept two.'

Does it not become clear to us, as we ponder these various lines of argument, that something more is needed, that when once the question of the truth of Christianity is seriously raised, it demands a serious and not a superficial answer? By all means let those, who have neither time nor ability to make themselves familiar with apologetics, give such answers as they can to the difficulties they may have to meet. Let them press with all their force the argument from experience, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.' Let them point to the beneficent influence which the Gospel has had in their own lives and in the lives of others. Let them urge the fact that their religion finds its sanction in so great a religious literature as the Bible. They will meet with many minds constituted like their own, for whom these arguments will possess much cogency. But they must not be puzzled and distressed if there are others who probe more deeply and discover that these answers will not still their obstinate questionings. It is just those who feel the difficulties so acutely whom it is often best worth our while to win for the Gospel. They will bring a much needed element of intellectual strength to reinforce the other types of Christian character. But Hort's complaint in his Hulsean Lectures of the credulity of Christians and the mischief which it is working seems to me only too abundantly justified by the kind of flimsy argument that with so many does duty for apologetics.

It is a significant fact, and as sad as it is significant, that the apologist has for many come to mean a man who is bent on winning his case, and is not too scrupulous in his way of doing it. In few instances is the maxim that the end justifies the means more dangerous. The reading of some apologetic books has left on me the feeling that any kind of plausible sophistry was thought by the writers good enough for their readers so long as it threw ridicule on the antagonist and lent a specious appearance to the writer's case. Arguments which no one would adduce in any other kind of discussion were cheerfully paraded as apologetic diamonds of the first water. The line often followed consisted in reaffirming positions with emphasis, in closing the eyes to the cogency of hostile arguments, and meeting them, if not with bare assertions or denunciations, yet with reasoning which in any other department of knowledge or opinion would impose on no one. It is with this indiscriminate defence that we must break decisively. We must be ready to listen to our opponents, frankly to consider what they have established. We must not defend positions irretrievably lost. We must desire the truth with sincerity and purchase it at whatever cost. We must distinguish between essentials and accidentals, and concentrate on what is vital. Our first duty is to find the truth, our second is to commend it to others by such arguments as are really solid and weighty. We should never descend to the arts of the demagogue, appeal to men's passions or prejudices, throw dust in their eyes or deceive them, as we may say, for their own good. We must cherish the most scrupulous sense of honour. Moreover we must be sympathetic. Too often the apologist has been a mere bruiser; to hit and to hit hard has been his motto. That, however, is not the

true way to victory. The man who really helps the doubter is the man who has felt the pressure of the problems, who knows from his own experience what it is to fight for his ground. His method is not to put the pistol at the heads of those whom he would persuade, but first to understand their position, to show them that he knows the burden of their difficulties, and then step by step, persuasively and with sweet reasonableness to win them to faith. And we must be conciliatory. Formerly the task of the apologist was thought to be to resist to the uttermost every concession to the views of his opponents. The true apologist instead of fighting them all along the line seeks rather to come to an understanding with them, to ask—How far can I go in meeting them without compromising essential truth ? And he has his reward, not only in the increased power he thus gains with those whom he wishes to convince, but in the added strength that his arguments thus acquire.

Moreover the apologist must not be lacking in courage. To this danger some teachers, just because of their reverence, are too often exposed. We catch in their utterance that note of timidity which unfits them for leadership in the present crisis. This type of piety is beautiful and all too rare, and my only wish is that it were not too delicate to stand a more bracing air. One of the few things to be regretted in their work is the cramped movement which may be discerned in it ; to be regretted all the more, because of the frequent insinuations that those are disloyal to their Master who strike for a more open sea.

He who would help his fellows in this domain must gird himself to the enterprise with all the difficulties and even with the dangers that the task involves. For we must not suppose that the work is easy or

lightly to be undertaken. Matthew Arnold's criticism of popular religion was often unjust. But I think he detected a real weakness when he spoke of our lack of intellectual seriousness. There ought to be no excuse for this. Just because the questions involved are so vital we ought not to flinch from the most searching investigation. We must be sure of our foundation, and never cease excavating till we strike the solid rock. But in this there is involved the necessity that inquiry should be free. We are to enter upon it with an open mind. Our motto must be, 'The truth at all costs.' We may leave no room for the common charge, that while we are professing to conduct an impartial investigation, we have all the while made up our minds as to the conclusions that we shall reach.

But it follows from this also, that the enterprise has its dangers. Dr. Hort reminds us that there can be no certainty that those who plunge into the stream will emerge on the Christian side. And it is a very common experience for those who undertake this quest to find their own position more or less modified by it. For the worse perhaps in some cases, but in other cases for the better. Out of such an experience there may grow a truer sense of the right proportions in which the faith is to be held. Accidents will be clearly distinguished from essentials, foreign excrescences will be cut away. And so there slowly takes shape before the mind, in all its beauty of outline and harmony of parts, the majestic structure of Christian truth. And thus he who started on this fearless investigation, renouncing all prejudices and foregone conclusions, and seeking only to find the truth, wins for himself a rich reward and is enabled to render precious service to his fellows. But the very condition of rendering this service is that he undertakes his

task sincerely unpledged to a particular result. Freedom is the very nerve of his investigation; seek to restrain it and its effectiveness is at once paralysed. Much of the mischief which afflicts us to-day arises out of the distrust that Christians have themselves created in the past by their attitude towards free inquiry. The position of one whose profession is bound up with a particular belief has difficulties of its own which lie in the very nature of the case. The coarse type of controversialist is always ready to say that his livelihood or his position in society forbids him to embark on an inquiry which might imperil these, and enlists him as a defender of the present conditions. The more refined and generous controversialist will not put it so bluntly, but he will probably say that his position unconsciously warps his judgment. When the intrinsic difficulties are so considerable, surely we ought to avoid making the impression as to our intellectual courage and honesty still more unfavourable than it is at present. If the churches have deservedly lost much of men's confidence in the past by this short-sighted policy, let us strive to win that confidence back by fairness in discussion, by readiness to hear what our opponents have to say, by careful weighing of their arguments and patient restatement of our own position. For these high debates we can be prepared only if we are serene in spirit, unruffled in temper, sympathetic in understanding, and prepared, at whatever sacrifice, for the unfaltering pursuit of truth.

In the present difficulties with which faith has to contend it is desirable that those who speak for the Christian side in the debate should be men of large outlook, flexible intellect, sympathetic temper, and open mind. They must especially have the faculty of discrimination, so that they may be able to dis-

tinguish between what is an essential and what is an accident of belief. They must get beneath the crust of accretion that has gathered over the original message and beware of staking the truth of the Gospel upon the truth of the precise form in which they themselves hold it.

We must not forget that the presentation of the truth is often its most effective defence. We ought to throw much stress upon teaching, and we should give the teaching in such a way as to secure for our people a genuine understanding of Christianity, and the grounds on which it rests. Some sceptical criticism, at least, hits really weak points in the popular presentation of Christianity. Our duty is not to be angry with our critics for showing us our faults, but to be grateful for the stimulus they give us to mend our defective statements. Very many who have been trained in a type of theology, which is becoming more and more impossible to thoughtful people, have broken not only with it but with Christianity altogether, because for them the two were identical. It may have been just one part of the system which had become incredible, but they had never been so trained as to put even this most obvious question, Is it an integral part of the system or an accidental accretion, or at least something which might be sacrificed without endangering the whole? Our young people are not to be blamed if they have been so badly brought up that they cannot distinguish an attack on views which they erroneously imagine to be part of Christianity from an attack on the Gospel itself. They ought never to have been allowed to make the initial mistake. What is presented for their acceptance should be the Gospel rather than some popular caricature of it. The better they understand the Bible the easier it will be

to save them from the tragic blunder so many have made, who have thought that the abandonment of a false but familiar type of Christian doctrine was equivalent to the surrender of Christianity itself. Accordingly, attacks from the outside are a challenge to ourselves to see that our views really are Christian, in harmony with the classical documents of our faith as they are incorporated in the New Testament, and if they are not in harmony with them, then to readjust them to those standards. Much of the rationalistic attack then falls to the ground; the well-instructed Christian feels on reading it, 'This does not touch me at all, for my position is altogether different from that on which the assault is made.' Prevention is better than cure, and one of the best preservatives against unbelief is an adequate statement of the truth.

But this does not really cover the whole ground, for one ought not to disguise the fact that grave difficulties are urged against Christianity even when it is correctly understood. There are many Christians who have never been troubled from first to last by a single intellectual doubt. Their temptation is to plume themselves upon this, and to be censorious of those who have passed through periods of intellectual struggle. Frequently, of course, their freedom from doubt is simply due to mental shallowness and laziness, though in other cases it has a worthier origin. But whatever its origin, they are wholly unjustified in their censoriousness, and no attempt on their part to interdict free discussion with a view to helping the perplexed ought to be tolerated for a moment.

There is a famous line of Vergil's which often returns to me as I think of the duty that lies upon the Church to protect its people from scepticism. When Æneas is wrecked on the Carthaginian shore, Dido takes

compassion on him, her own troubles having taught her to be sympathetic with the unfortunate. It is in her address to Æneas that the line occurs whose exquisite beauty in the original is sadly spoiled by an English rendering :—

> 'Myself not unversed in misfortune, I am learning to succour the wretched.'

We can expect little sympathy, perhaps, in our work of helping the doubting from those who impatiently wonder why people should be troubled with doubts at all. But those of us whose faith is all the more precious that we have had to fight for our ground will certainly not be hindered in our task by the failure of sympathy and comprehension on the part of the self-complacent and censorious.

Again we must avoid the uncharitableness which often mars the Christian's attitude to unbelief. It is perhaps true that a man is sometimes to blame for his loss of faith, and that a moral defect lies at the root of the change. But in the main nothing is more inadequate as an explanation than the easy ascription of such results to intellectual conceit or restiveness beneath the curb of the moral law. To many hearts the loss of faith is a tragedy of desolation, in which the soul is neither numb nor dead, but quick with the acutest pain.

Still more must we avoid the too common assumption as to the destiny of those who have rejected the Gospel. We may lament the conclusions reached, but for our judgment on the inquirer it is not the conclusions reached which are all important, but rather the love of truth that prompts the search and the spirit in which the quest is conducted. The disinterested seeking after truth is one form of the search for God,

who is the Eternal Truth itself, and cannot be other than praiseworthy in His sight so long as the temper and spirit of it remain such as He can approve. It is very unbecoming for a frail mortal to usurp the function of Omniscience, and say with reference to any particular individual that he is destined to perish. I am much shocked by the irreligious temper Christians have often displayed in this respect. It is one thing for us to lay down general principles as to future retribution, it is quite another thing to arrogate to ourselves the function of deciding individual cases which belongs to Him alone who is the searcher of hearts. Language that was fitting on the lips of Jesus, or those who were commissioned by Him to utter it, is language which we may have no warrant to use. But in the next place, it is to me quite incredible that God could send any man to hell for an intellectual mistake, sincerely held after the attempt had been made to reach the truth. If Christianity involved the conclusions sometimes deduced from it, it would not deserve to be true. For an increasing number the preservation of belief grows harder and harder, and it is only with difficulty that they cling to the life-boat while the billows of unbelief seek to snatch them from it. Is this a time for defenders of Christianity to beat off those numb, relaxing fingers by definitions of the Gospel that make it so incredible?

And now to draw this discussion to a close. I believe that the policy of silence is impracticable, and even if it were not so, it is neither safe nor wise. I regard it as one of our most urgent tasks to arm our young people against unbelief. I further believe that no surer means can be found to win their confidence in us than to give them practical assurances that we really know the difficulties ourselves, and

have felt them as such, but still in spite of them retain our faith. I think, too, that they will be favourably impressed if we cultivate fairness of tone, avoiding all denunciation and anathema of those who do not agree with us. They will also be helped if we show a readiness to learn and to restate our positions, removing such weaknesses as criticism has detected and patiently conforming our conceptions to such higher visions of truth as it may please God to grant us. We shall never make any headway in meeting the present attack on our faith unless certain conditions are observed. First, we must take pains to understand it. Secondly, we must recognize that objections in many cases do not arise out of either intellectual or moral perversity, and are not to be treated as mere cavils. They really rest on difficulties which are inherent in the Christian position itself. Thirdly, unless we show that we have mastered them, and have tried in a dispassionate spirit to do them justice, we cannot expect our protestations of belief to have weight with those who look to us for leadership. We must know the worst, we must show that we know the worst, we must be prepared ourselves fairly to state the worst that can be alleged against us. The time has gone by for keeping faith in a sickly hothouse, the glass is crashing all about us, and God has let loose upon us the keen and searching winds of hostile criticism. It is to the end that faith may be no longer merely a delicate and beautiful flower, but tough and sinewy, deep-rooted and unbending to the fiercest winds that blow.

CHAPTER III

NEW LIGHT ON THE BIBLE

Such then must be the temper in which we approach our task. And our method must correspond with it. We can rightly appraise the value of the Bible only when we have apprehended its true nature. And this cannot be settled by mere assertion. We must set aside the dogmatic and adopt the scientific method. In other words, we shall not put the question, What must the facts have been? We shall seek to discover by patient inquiry what they were. We shall not set out with preconceived theories but start with an open mind, ready to accept whatever truth our researches may bring to light. It is neither reverence nor humility to force a theory of the Bible upon it instead of eliciting one from it. We must be content to take up the Bible just as we should take up any other piece of literature. It may be said, of course, that the Bible is unlike other books, and must be placed in a class by itself. But in the first place, it is useless to make assertions of this kind to those whom we are anxious to help, when they have been already disturbed by the confident assertions that the Bible holds no longer the position which an earlier age assigned to it. Moreover, if the Bible possesses the exceptional qualities which are claimed for it, we may naturally expect them to be established without difficulty. Qualities so conspicuous ought easily to be made plain.

When once the question has been started it must be set at rest.

If, for example, we sum up our impression of the Bible in the old-fashioned way of asserting its inspiration, we must be on our guard lest we fill the term with a content and a significance which our experience does not warrant. The danger of these large and vague terms is that people use them without submitting them to analysis, and draw from them conclusions for which the facts give little or no reason. What the inspiration of the Bible is we can ascertain only from an investigation of the Bible itself, and an observation of the effects it produces. The study of the facts must precede the elaboration of theories. If we bring a ready-made theory of inspiration to the study of the Bible, we shall be in peril of suppressing or manipulating phenomena inconsistent with it. It is further clear that this course is fundamentally inconsistent with the reverence for the Bible which the theory presupposes. The truly reverent method is to investigate the Bible and let the facts speak for themselves ; the method of making the Bible say what we think it ought to say is one of which it would be hard to decide whether it was distinguished chiefly by its irreverence or its conceit.

It will be a convenient starting point to inquire into the conditions which make it so much easier for us to understand it than for the men of earlier generations. I place first the gains that have come to us through exploration. We are all familiar with the way in which the spade has brought to light long-buried civilizations in Assyria, in Babylonia, in Arabia, in Egypt, in Crete, and in Palestine. These explorations have taught us much concerning the political history and social conditions of the peoples with which Israel was in contact, and which vitally influenced their political and religious

development. Personalities that were little more than names to the Old Testament reader have now become familiar characters, their career known in detail, and their significance for Israel's history illuminated with a flood of light. We see, for example, how vitally the religion of Israel was affected by the relations of the northern and southern kingdoms to the great empires of Assyria and Babylonia from the eighth to the sixth centuries before Christ, how much that was greatest in Hebrew prophecy was to some extent elicited and to a large extent conditioned by these relations. It is still a subject of keen dispute how far the Babylonian culture affected the civilization and religion of Israel, and some of the extremer theories probably need very considerable modification. But the sum total of influence, direct and indirect, must have been very great, and it is only in comparatively recent times that the student of the Bible has had the material in his hands for judging how great it was.

Intimately connected with the light that has come from the recovery of older civilizations is that which we have received through the discovery of documents. Of these I will mention only a few. The Moabite Stone and the Siloam inscription have been valuable not only for the light they have thrown on history but for palæography. They enable us to see how Hebrew was written many centuries before Christ, and have thus given assistance in the textual criticism of the Old Testament. Moreover, the Moabite Stone has revealed a remarkable affinity in certain respects between the religions of Moab and Israel. Sennacherib's inscription has supplemented the Biblical narrative of his invasion, and raised a series of interesting new problems. Far more important than these, however, was the discovery, first of the Tel el-Amarna tablets, and secondly

of the Code of Hammurabi. The significance of the former discovery consisted in this, that it revealed the extent to which Palestine was saturated with Babylonian civilization some centuries before the time when Israel settled in Palestine. The addition the tablets have made to our knowledge of history is by no means insignificant, but their main significance lies in their disclosure of the startling fact that the very difficult cuneiform language and script were used for diplomatic intercourse between the Canaanite rulers and their Egyptian suzerain. Even more important is the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi, which is probably at least half a millennium older than the Tel el-Amarna correspondence, and older still than the time of Moses. It exhibits very striking affinities with the earliest stratum of Hebrew legislation, but how that relationship is to be accounted for still remains a problem. In any case it shows what on other grounds had previously been probable, that the Hebrew legislation was not original, but drew upon earlier sources, and had, in fact, a long history behind it. Possibly the most sensational of all the discoveries is that of the Aramaic papyri which have been found in Egypt, written by Israelites in the fifth century before Christ. It is true that illegitimate inferences have been drawn from them by zealous opponents of Biblical criticism, and that they are less momentous as a contribution to our knowledge of the period or for the light they throw on the Old Testament than had been hoped. Yet they are of great interest and of considerable value, linguistic, literary, and historical.

Similarly, if we turn to the New Testament there is much to encourage us. First of all we have fresh manuscripts of the highest importance, such as the Greek Codex found at Sinai by Tischendorf and the Syriac Codex of

the Gospels more recently discovered by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson. I have just spoken of the Aramaic papyri, but the Greek papyri, which have been found in vastly greater numbers have proved to be of exceptional importance. I touch in another chapter on their bearing on the language of the New Testament, and restrict myself here to the light they throw on the contemporary civilization, and the fuller understanding we have thus gained of the world into which Christianity came.

From the dry sands of Egypt vast multitudes of documents have come to light. It is tragic to think that even vaster quantities had been destroyed, often in sheer wantonness. Naturally for the fellaheen of Egypt or for illiterate European soldiers there was a good deal of excuse, since they could not guess the loss that they might be inflicting on scholarship and research. Indeed, one might go further and say that even Greek scholars might with some excuse have surrendered after examination many of these documents to the flames. The natural instinct of the scholar in coming across a quantity of Greek documents would be to search for literary remains. He would wish above all things to recover some of those precious treasures of classical literature which we seemed to have lost irretrievably, or to find the works of historians which would enable him to correct and complete his knowledge of many an obscure episode in ancient history. Or, if his interests were specifically Christian, he would desire to find an early Gospel or the lost work of Papias, or some other priceless relic, such as genuine Gnostic treatises or the non-apologetic works of Justin Martyr. And such treasures of Egypt have come to us, though all too sparingly. And when these had been sifted out of the pile there are probably many scholars who would have

thought what remained to be of little value. For of what use, it might be asked, are old leases, wills, contracts, petitions and invitations, ill-spelt and ungrammatical letters scrawled by uncultured and commonplace people, or their account-books and memoranda ? So it might plausibly have been argued. And yet some of the most eminent students would affirm that the non-literary papyri are of the greater value. Such a judgment might indeed be reversed if by a series of sensational finds we recovered much of the most important lost literature. But it is at present arguable that the non-literary papyri are the more valuable. They enable us in the first place to reconstruct the life of the ordinary individual and of the community. A civilization is raised from the dead for us. It stands revealed in its actual colour and clothing, characteristic attitudes are caught for us with the fidelity of an instantaneous photograph. Hitherto we have known the life of antiquity in the main from the literary sources, and there is in such descriptions an inevitable touch of artificiality. This is most felt when a man is describing his own experiences, for self-consciousness is fatal to naturalness and simplicity. But even when he is describing the life about him the desire for literary effect spoils the truth of the portrait. We have exaggeration here and understatement there, since the artist selects his material in order that he may produce an artistic impression. Moreover, literary people are too apt to write with their own prepossessions and from a somewhat narrow and prejudiced outlook. They stand outside the life of the uneducated masses, and do not enter into their experiences with the intimate sympathy which is essential for a completely adequate representation. It is their tendency to neglect the poorer strata of society and depict by preference the life of those classes

to which they feel themselves to be most akin. Thus the multitudes are dumb to posterity, and their life, with its hopes and fears, its struggles and its triumphs, its pleasures simple or debased, its hunger, its weariness, and its pain, is known to us by partial and one-sided description, or dimly guessed by the sympathetic imagination. But the voiceless masses have become articulate for us in these latter days, and a society which ages ago sank into oblivion is brought back on the stage of history. Across the intervening centuries, from a civilization so alien to our own, we hear that universal human language which strikes its immediate echo in our heart. Especially the familiar unstudied letters, written with no thought that any eye but that of the recipient would ever rest upon them, but now scrutinized by scholars with the keenest interest, touch us in their frank and artless revelation of feeling, with that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. The pessimistic impressions derived from satirists and historians are corrected by the papyri, which have shown us that the picture was painted in colours altogether too dark, and that the life of the masses was much sounder than we had imagined. And even those things which have been long familiar come to us with a strangely vivid freshness when we read them in these letters. Female infanticide, for example, or exposure of new-born children, is a quite familiar custom of antiquity. But this brutal and unnatural custom stands out with a new distinctness when we read a letter sent by Hilarion to his wife Alis bidding her save her child if it was a boy, but if a girl to " cast it out." It is an interesting and suggestive coincidence that this letter was written in the year 1 B.C. Deissmann devotes not a little of his *Light from the Ancient East*, to the task of reconstructing much of the social life of the period from the new evi-

dence which has come to hand. And the importance of this does not lie simply in the new material it offers to historians of antiquity. It has a special interest for those who are engaged in the investigation of primitive Christianity. It is not possible for us to understand any movement in history apart from its environment, and while Christianity came to us out of the eternal, it clothed itself in the raiment of time. It stood in intimate connexion with the religion and culture of its age, it sought for points of contact with earlier ideas and institutions that it might fill them with a new spirit and power. Its wisest thinkers claimed for Christ all that had been truly and nobly said by men who had never heard His name. And thus Christianity was not isolated from the world in which it was lived; it was placed in that world as the leaven in the three measures of meal.

It is now generally agreed that the study of New Testament theology has gained much and is likely to gain more from familiarity with the contemporary Judaism. This line of research has in recent times been worked with great enthusiasm. New documents, such as the Book of Enoch or the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, have come to light and received minute and prolonged investigation. Documents which were previously known have been studied afresh to great purpose. It is quite true that much still remains to be done, and the enthusiasm of discoverers has probably carried them too far. It is nevertheless undeniable that many obscurities in the New Testament have been mitigated and many passages have gained a new fulness of meaning through the study of the contemporary Jewish literature.

A great debt is due also to geography and history, and that both in the Old Testament and in the New. The

work which has been done in the survey of Palestine, in the tracing of routes, the identification of sites, the investigation of geological questions, has been of very great value ; and similarly the explorations which have taken place in Asia Minor have done much to illuminate for us the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. Of historical research as it affects the Old Testament I have already spoken, but it has also been fruitful for the New Testament. The Gospel was not a revelation in a vacuum. It was no isolated phenomenon, but one that touched life intimately at many points. It was connected by very close ties with the contemporary civilization, culture, and thought ; therefore what helps us to understand the latter contributes also to our knowledge of the former. To take one instance—In what relation did the Roman government stand to the new religion ? When did it recognize it as a religion distinct from Judaism ? Through what phases did the imperial policy respecting it pass ? The answer is of moment when we come to date our New Testament books. We are driven to ask what attitude towards the Roman government did the writers adopt, and what attitude of the Roman government to the Gospel do they reflect ? These questions have an important bearing on the date of such books as the First Epistle of Peter or the Acts of the Apostles. It must be confessed that in their application of this criterion scholars widely differ. Nevertheless they are largely indebted to historical students that they have the criterion to apply.

Another science which has contributed much to the interpretation of the Bible is anthropology. This has been especially illuminating for the religious institutions of Israel. The Hebrews were a Semitic people, and they brought with them into their independent existence a very rich inheritance of Semitic customs,

rites, and beliefs. A study of Semitic heathendom reveals a large number of parallels with customs familiar to us from the Old Testament. This is especially true of Arabian heathenism. But the student of anthropology is struck by the constant emergence in the Old Testament of religious ideas and practices which closely resemble those to be met with among savage peoples. What importance in our general estimate of Scripture we should attach to this fact will, I hope, become clear at a later point. Meanwhile, I simply wish to point out how much our understanding of the Old Testament has been enriched by this science. Religious practices, for which even enlightened scholars till recently assigned some far-fetched sentimental reason, or in which they saw concealed some deep religious mystery, have received their true explanation from the researches of the anthropologist. The student of ritual is often confronted with a custom which seems to stand quite isolated in the religion he is investigating. It belongs to a lower stratum of thought and practice than that which the religion as a whole has reached. Accordingly he regards it as probably a survival from an earlier stage with which it would be more in harmony. But how is he to know its meaning? Here the comparative method comes to his help. He inquires whether a similar rite is practised among other peoples, first of all looking for it among neighbouring peoples and then among peoples more remote. He may find it, or something very much like it, perhaps widely diffused, perhaps only here and there. But he studies each individual instance in its context. He will find that in several cases the rite is not isolated as in the instance from which he starts. Other rites are connected with it, this rite perhaps in one case, that in another. He has then carefully to compare his results and decide what is essential and what is irrelevant,

and by this delicate process of combination and elimination try to reconstruct the rite in its original form and interpret its significance. Then he can return to the point from which he started, and in the light of his researches not simply interpret the practice which he set out to explain, but gain some information as to vanished stages in the religion itself. By the pursuit of this method much has been learnt as to the original meaning of such practices as those of sacrifice or circumcision, and such ideas and usages as we associate with the term uncleanness.

In the next place we are in possession of a far purer text of the New Testament. This has not been wholly due to the discovery of new manuscripts but very largely to the employment of more scientific methods. The old material has been investigated with unprecedented thoroughness, and the new material has proved most valuable in determining the families and genealogical relations of the manuscripts. It is true that much still remains to be done. Some of the old problems are still debated with great keenness and new problems have come to the front. Nevertheless, in two respects the student of the New Testament is now in a better position than in earlier times. He has by common consent a much purer text than the Received Text ; he has also a much larger mass of material on which to base his judgment and much sounder methods to bring to bear on it. In the Old Testament, it is true, we are still a long way from having reached the position we have attained in the New. Nevertheless, even here much has been done to restore the original text, and in some instances, where that has not been possible, to show us how much it stands in need of restoration. Unfortunately, as I have said before, we have only one type of Hebrew text preserved to us, and therefore cannot

work back by the comparative method to an earlier text; but the translations give us much help, especially the Septuagint, though the original text of this version is itself far from determined.

The next advantage I would mention is that, by their thorough and minute study of the Biblical literature, scholars have in many instances succeeded in discovering the structure of the documents and placing them in their approximate chronological order. We understand the construction of the Bible in a way which was impossible to our predecessors, and this has lent a wholly new interest to it. I have no wish to exaggerate the importance of criticism or the finality of its results. On both of these points I shall have something to say later, but it is no exaggeration to say that there is a very remarkable consensus of critics in the analysis of the Old Testament and several important points of agreement reached by general consent in the New.

There has also been an equally minute investigation into the meaning of Scripture. I do not desire to disparage the older commentators. The best of them are still worth reading, and to them we owe many valuable elements in our modern commentaries. At the same time, no one whose business it is to follow this line of study would be likely to deny that a quite unprecedented advance was made during the nineteenth century in the interpretation of Scripture. The reason for the difference is not to be found in the greater penetration or the finer exegetical genius or the riper scholarship of our modern commentators, but in the much improved conditions under which they do their work and the more adequate methods by which their research is guided. The Biblical writings are now much better understood, thanks to the far more thorough knowledge we possess of Semitic languages and the principles of

comparative philology, thanks also to the new light which has shone on the Greek of the New Testament, and all the other advantages to which I have alluded, that have influenced the interpretation of Scripture, and thus made it possible for commentaries to be written which represent an immense advance on earlier work of the kind.

And as the crown of all this prolonged and arduous study we have the science of Biblical Theology. To this I have previously alluded, and I must return to discuss at some length the crucial problems it raises. But some additional words are necessary at this point. It was the bane of old-fashioned Biblical study that it treated the Bible as a homogeneous book, written from a single point of view and exhibiting a consistent scheme of theology. Differences could not fail to be recognized, but their significance was misunderstood. They were supposed to consist simply in the greater or less degree of clearness with which the doctrine was enunciated. Development was admitted, but it was a development from obscurity to clearness, the same thing being meant all the time. In the New Testament divergences between the different writers in the presentation of Christianity were blurred or wholly lost sight of. For example, no difficulty was felt in attributing the Epistle to the Hebrews to the Apostle Paul, a feat impossible to anyone who has really understood the Pauline theology and the theology of that Epistle. Now the rise of Biblical Theology has impressed upon us the necessity of keeping the various Biblical writers distinct and reconstructing the development of the religion from its dawn to the point where we take leave of it at the close of the Canon. And this has been an enormous gain. Our predecessors were apt to be colour-blind to the glorious variety of Scripture.

We who understand better how rich is the treasure we possess in it, echo with fuller appreciation the great words with which the Epistle to the Hebrews opens : " God, who in many parts and in many ways spake of old time to the fathers in the prophets, has at the end of these days spoken to us in a Son."

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND IN ENGLISH

In my opening chapters I endeavoured to indicate the causes of the present disquiet with reference to the Bible, and to plead that they must be met, not, with denunciation or panic, but with that calm and resolute determination to face the real situation which is alone worthy of a Christian. Accordingly it is our first task to examine the actual phenomena in order that we may build securely on a basis of observed fact. The bane of so much discussion in the past has been its *a priori* character. In other words, people have talked as though the main problem could be settled by purely speculative considerations rather than by patient examination of the facts themselves. The nature of the Bible and the quality of its inspiration were theoretically deduced from a sense of the fitness of things, and God was assumed to have acted on the principles which would have guided His exponents if they had been in His place. But the dogmatic method has given place to the scientific method, and the question we now ask is not, What must the Bible be ? but, What is the Bible ?

I begin, then, with the languages of the Bible. It may seem that this is a question rather for students or scholars than for the general reader. But I deliber-

ately begin with the languages, firstly, because we cannot assume that it is a matter of indifference that these languages were chosen to be the vehicle of revelation, and secondly, because points will emerge in the course of our exposition which will prove of value to us at later points in our discussion.

We have three languages in the Bible—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The second of these need not detain us. Comparatively little of the Old Testament is written in it ; it is found chiefly in Ezra and Daniel. This language used to go by the name of Chaldee, since it was the common opinion that the Jews had learnt to speak it in the Babylonian exile and brought it back with them to Palestine. As a matter of fact, this was not the case. The language was already on the ground, and was spoken over a large area. Further, the Babylonian language was not Aramaic. Lastly, we know that Hebrew was spoken at Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah, nearly a century after the return under Cyrus. It was slowly strangled by Aramaic, which was the language of the country in the time of Christ. Hebrew continued to be written as a literary language, so that it is not unnatural that the later books of the Old Testament exhibit a strong Aramaic colouring.

Aramaic and Hebrew are both Semitic languages. The group to which they belong embraces, among other languages, Assyrian, Arabic, Phœnician, and Ethiopic. With a few exceptions, especially pronouns, Semitic roots consist of three letters which have been ultimately derived from roots of two letters. These letters are consonants, for the vowels simply express the modifications of the idea, while the root meaning is expressed by the consonants. All things are looked upon as living, so that there are only two genders, the neuter being un-

known. The Semitic languages also differ from those with which we are familiar in the absence of compounds. Some things that I shall have to say about Hebrew are true of the Semitic languages generally.

Perhaps it may serve as well as anything else to introduce us to the consideration of Hebrew if I begin with a question which may stir a sympathetic response in the minds of some of my readers, Why is it that students find Hebrew so difficult? In the first place there is the uncouth character which makes it much less agreeable and easy to read than many languages. A Western student has often been reading Hebrew for a considerable time before he attains any fluency. Moreover, many of the letters are much alike, so that the beginner finds it difficult to discriminate between them. The character is written from right to left, and thus the instinct we have formed in this respect has to be violated. What, however, constitutes a much more serious difficulty than either of these is the fact that Hebrew was written without vowels. It was only several centuries after the time of Christ that a series of signs was introduced into the text to indicate the vowels which should be supplied. This fact is of the utmost importance in other respects, but it is quite easy to see how difficult it must be for a student, who has always been accustomed to read consonants and vowels continuously, to have a system of this kind, in which vowel sounds are indicated by an elaborate system of dots and dashes placed above and below the consonants. And the difficulty is all the greater that the law of the syllable and the constant shifting of the accent introduce frequent changes in the vocalization. This difficulty is intensified by the peculiar laws which govern the punctuation of the gutturals, while a new series of difficulties emerges with the tendency of the

weak letters to fall out or to be assimilated to stronger consonants. As I have already said Hebrew roots consist of three consonants, but the student is frequently baffled by the fact that one or possibly even two of these consonants have disappeared from the form which he has before him, and he has to reconstruct them. Lastly, in the question of syntax considerable difficulty is created by the character of the Hebrew tenses. These do not, as with ourselves, express time relations so much as the completeness or incompleteness of an action. Accordingly the student, if he is to gain the full force of the Hebrew, has to think himself into an entirely different mental attitude or he misses the vividness of much that would be felt by the original readers.

The enumeration of these difficulties might seem to suggest that the Hebrew language was badly designed to be the medium through which God's revelation should be conveyed. And I have no wish to minimize them. But there are several considerations which it is well for us to bear in mind. The most important fact is that Hebrew was written in an alphabetic and not in another type of script. There were more advanced civilizations, such as the Chinese or Assyrian, which had not invented an alphabet. In an alphabetic system a letter stands for an individual sound, so that a syllable often consists of more signs than one. But in Assyrian the characters represent not letters but syllables. Moreover, these characters are also ideograms—that is, they frequently represent ideas rather than sounds. In some cases the signs are what is known as polyphonic. In other words, the same sign may be pronounced in two or more ways. Now it would not have been an unnatural thing for the Old Testament to have been written in the Assyrian rather than in the Hebrew script. We know that Babylonian culture had penetrated into Palestine many

centuries before the birth of the Israelitish people. It is a fact of immense significance that the diplomatic correspondence which has been recovered from Tel el-Amarna presents us with letters written in the fifteenth century before Christ from Canaan to Egypt in the Babylonian language and the cuneiform script. It would not, therefore, have been surprising if the Hebrews from the desert, when they learnt the civilization of Canaan, had adopted the cuneiform writing. It is a matter for devout thankfulness that they did not do so, for the obstacles which the student of Hebrew has to confront would have been multiplied tenfold if he had had to learn cuneiform in order to read his Old Testament in the original. By the side of this the difficulties I have mentioned shrink into comparative insignificance.

And in certain respects we may thankfully recognize that Hebrew was well adapted for its purpose. The language expresses the genius of the people, and it is altogether fitting, that there should be this correspondence between the characteristics of the people and the language in which the religious literature it gave to the world was enshrined. It is a very concrete language, remarkably picturesque and graphic. The structure of its sentences is very simple. The Hebrew temper of mind did not favour complexity. It did not build complicated periods in which a whole series of statements or ideas were elaborately connected together and placed in their logical relations by a number of subordinate clauses, precisely related to the main clause of the sentence, while the sentences themselves were woven together into a closely-knit fabric of argument or narrative. The note of Hebrew style is that the sentences are brief and co-ordinated together. It is the child's way of putting things which we find in the Old Testament, and it is this quality which makes much of

the narrative of the Old Testament so singularly fascinating. Closely allied to this simplicity of structure is the almost complete absence of philosophic terminology. This corresponds to a marked quality of the Hebrew genius. It was not speculative and did not concern itself with the problems of metaphysics. Hebrew wisdom was concrete not abstract, engaged with the problems presented by the pressing needs of life rather than those which are suggested by intellectual curiosity. For the Israelites the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom, and the questions which challenged their reflection were rather such as those created by the suffering of the righteous or the prosperity of the wicked. Now this practical ethical temper, which finds such admirable expression in the language, was one element in the equipment of the Hebrews to become the people of revelation. For it is the note of the prophet, as distinguished from the philosopher, that he is a man of vision rather than reflection. He employs affirmation rather than argument, and by throwing religion and morality into the foreground he reads us a needed lesson on the relative importance of conduct and speculation. There is another quality to which attention should be called—namely, that Hebrew loses comparatively little in translation. It is true that Hebrew can often express in one word what a more analytic language such as English has to express in several. Moreover, a thorough mastery of the tenses brings out the beauty and vividness of the style in a way which cannot be transferred into English. But, in the main, I think it is true that Hebrew lends itself singularly well to translation, a matter of great importance in a book designed to teach the world the truth about God.

But now it is time to turn to the other language in which God's supreme revelation has come to us. It

used to be thought that the Greek of the New Testament was something quite isolated in its character without any counterpart in secular literature and fitted by this uniqueness in grammar and vocabulary to be, as it was sometimes called, the language of the Holy Ghost. It was supposed to be largely Hebraistic in its character. On this subject a flood of light has been thrown in recent years by the discovery in Egypt of very large numbers of Greek documents written upon papyrus. Among these there are, of course, fragments of ancient literature. But there are a great number of non-literary letters, many of them written by uneducated people. By a brilliant intuition a young German scholar, Adolf Deissmann, saw that these papyri in which ordinary people expressed without artifice their thoughts and emotions, or recorded the commonplace incidents of their everyday life, were written in the language in which the New Testament writers expressed the sublime truths of the Gospel and told the story of Jesus and His apostles. The fiction of Biblical Greek has disappeared before evidence which shows us that alike in grammar and vocabulary New Testament Greek was just the colloquial Greek of its time, which was much simpler and less elaborate in its syntax than classical Greek. Thus by the disclosure of a wholly new set of facts the language of the New Testament has been brought out of the isolation to which it had so long been relegated and replaced in its true historical setting. It is a great discovery which has thus come to us, for it is likely to settle many problems which have been raised by the language of the New Testament and to remove many misconceptions. Words which were regarded as peculiar to Biblical Greek now often prove to have been quite common at the time ; grammatical constructions which were traced to Hebrew influence, or

which were interpreted rigorously by the usage of Attic Greek, are now found in use among peoples who can scarcely have created them under Jewish influence, and employed with much greater laxity than strict Attic would have permitted. This has far-reaching results for the interpretation of the New Testament, and as a consequence for the construction of theology. And it teaches us that there is no such thing as a specialized language of the Holy Ghost, but that, as Dr. J. H. Moulton has finely said, when He spoke it was, as we should have expected, in the tongue of the common people.

If we ask how Greek compares with Hebrew from the learner's point of view, the following facts may be mentioned. The characters in which it is written are much simpler, and, what is still more important, the alphabet includes vowels as well as consonants. The vowels are thus an integral part of the word, and the forms are therefore learnt and remembered with much greater ease, since the eye takes them in and retains them with much less difficulty. The syntax is also more congenial to the Western mind. In particular, although the tenses present difficulties of their own, they are less fundamental than those which attach to the tenses in Hebrew.

It is not easy for us to overrate the significance of the fact that the New Testament was written in Greek. Since nearly all the New Testament writers were Jews, it would not have been surprising if they had written some parts of it in Hebrew or Aramaic. Naturally this would not be expected in the case of Epistles written to Greek-speaking communities, but there are other parts of the New Testament, especially the first Gospel, which Renan has rightly called the most important book in the world, that might quite easily have been

written in Aramaic, and behind which it is almost certain that an Aramaic source actually stood. In many respects the scholar would have welcomed the preservation of an Aramaic Gospel. But against this we must set the fact that it would have greatly increased the difficulties of the ordinary New Testament student.

In the next place, while it was fitting that the Old Testament should come to us clothed in a language which so perfectly expressed the Hebrew genius, it was fitting that another medium should be chosen for the New. The religion of Israel from first to last was national in its character and limited in its appeal. But Christianity burst the contracted limits of the Jewish race and offered itself as a religion for mankind. And therefore it was fitting that the classical documents of our religion should not be enshrined in a language so parochial as Hebrew, but in a language which could aspire better than any other to be regarded as the universal language of the time.

No doubt it may be urged that this language was itself destined to give place to other languages. But what is true of Hebrew is largely true also of the Greek in which the New Testament was written. Just in virtue of the fact that it was the language of the common people, less elaborate and literary than classical Greek, it also suffers comparatively little in translation. Moreover, inasmuch as there is little poetry in the New Testament the peculiar difficulties incident to the rendering of poetry into another language are almost entirely absent.

And the premier rank which belongs to Greek considered as a language must be borne in mind. It was a language very rich in vocabulary and wonderfully flexible in structure. It was thus capable, as Hebrew

was not, of expressing the finest shades of meaning and the subtlest abstractions of thought. For the adequate statement of a religion which was to appeal not simply to the Semitic but to the Indo-European mind with its speculative impulse and need for metaphysical satisfaction, such a language as Hebrew would have been inadequate. The qualities of Greek have been described in glowing language by H. N. Coleridge, from whom I make the following quotation :—

'Greek, the shrine of the genius of the old world, as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves ; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and distinctness of Nature herself, to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded ; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English ; with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer ; at once the variety and the picturesqueness of Homer, the gloom and the intensity of Æschylus ; not compressed to the closest by Thucydides, not fathomed to the bottom by Plato, not sounding with all its thunders, not lit up with all its ardours, even under the Promethean touch of Demosthenes himself.'

We could not, indeed, apply this splendid description without considerable qualification to the Greek of the New Testament. Yet, when we look at the language and the style, not as an end in themselves but as the means to an end, we may gratefully admit that the very limitations are turned into advantages. And as the conclusion of this part of our theme we may reverently and thankfully recognize that even the choice of the languages of revelation was not left uncared for by the providence of God.

But since many who will read this work cannot go behind the English to the original languages, it is fitting

that this chapter should close with some words on the English versions of the Bible. I have no space to dwell on the earlier paraphrases and translations, the work of Cædmon, King Alfred or Bede. It would be impossible, however, to omit Wycliffe and his helpers. The difficult questions which are raised about the authorship of the Wycliffe Bible may here be left aside. The translation was made from the Latin Vulgate, not from the Hebrew and Greek originals. It was, of course, distributed in manuscript, but even so had a wide circulation, as is illustrated by the fact that at the present day not less than 150 manuscripts are in existence containing the whole or part of it. It is an interesting question how far it influenced later translations. Tyndale explicitly says that his work was undertaken without help from any predecessor. Some have inferred from coincidences between his version and the Wycliffe Bible that he had been influenced by the latter. Such influence as there was, however, was more probably indirect. Much in the earlier translation had been absorbed into the language of the time, and was probably taken over by Tyndale without any consciousness that the phrases he thus employed were derived from the earlier work. It is pleasant to think that Wycliffe's influence was exerted in this way, making his renderings circulate as current coin in the language of the people, and indirectly preparing the way for the later versions. It must, however, be remembered that the coincidences may be partly accounted for by the fact that while Wycliffe translated from the Vulgate and Tyndale from the original languages, the later translator also diligently used the Vulgate, and to its influence identical renderings may very well be traced. Between the two versions, however, there had come in one of the most revolutionary factors in the progress of

civilization—the invention of printing. It was possible for the later translations to gain a wide diffusion undreamed of when every copy had to be laboriously written out by hand.

Beyond all other names of translators we should probably hold that of William Tyndale in most grateful remembrance. It is matter of common knowledge that while he was still quite young he expressed the intention that if his life were spared he would make it possible for the ploughboy to know more of the Bible than the Pope himself. It was, indeed, a misfortune that fidelity to his work curtailed his career while much still remained to be done. When in 1535 his enemies at last brought him to his death he had published a translation of the New Testament, the Pentateuch, and the Book of Jonah. He left behind him in manuscript the translation of the Books from Joshua to 2 Chronicles. When we remember how much of Tyndale's work survives in the Authorized Version we are tempted to regard it as an irreparable loss that he was not spared to complete the translation of the Old Testament. On an average it may be said that five-sixths of the Authorized Version is Tyndale's work, in those portions which he had translated. When the praise of the Authorized Version is in our lips it should never be forgotten that to him rather than to any other man the chief credit for it is due. Nor must we forget the fact to which I have already alluded—that Tyndale was the first to make a translation into English direct from the original. A comparison between the first edition of his New Testament and the revision of it in 1534 warrants a belief that had his life not been cut short by violence he would have succeeded in reaching a higher standard of excellence than that which he actually achieved. In the year of Tyndale's death the first complete translation

of the Bible to be printed in English appeared. This was Coverdale's work. He did not, however, go back to the Hebrew and Greek originals ; he translated from Latin and German, especially from the Latin Vulgate and Luther's German translation. But he made great use of Tyndale's Version. Two years later Matthew's Bible appeared. This was compiled by John Rogers, who was the first to suffer for his faith under Queen Mary. Practically it was Tyndale's Version, the parts which Tyndale had not translated being supplied from Coverdale. Passing by Taverner's Bible in 1539, we come to the Great Bible which was published in the same year. This was prepared by Coverdale with the help of other scholars, and was substantially a revision of Matthew's Bible. In the Church of England this Version still holds its ground so far as the Psalter is concerned, the Prayer-Book Version being derived from it rather than from the Authorized Version. In obedience to a royal proclamation, a copy was placed in every church. It is remarkable that no fewer than four versions of the Bible thus appeared in the brief period 1535-1539. The Great Bible held its ground for several years, and it was not till 1560 that it had to face the rivalry of one of the most important of all the predecessors of the Authorized Version. This was the Geneva Bible, published in 1560. It was an admirable translation, both learned and accurate. Printed in Roman type rather than in black letter, issued in a far handier form than its predecessors, supplemented like some of these with pungent controversial notes, it is not wonderful that it became the most favourite of all versions and was at a later time the most formidable rival to the Authorized Version. The Puritans naturally preferred a Bible with so Calvinistic a flavour. It was this quality, however, which limited its appeal, and

led to the next translation, that known as the Bishops' Bible, which appeared in 1568. The dignitaries of the Church of England, true to their dislike of extremes, desired a Bible that should be free from a polemical element, which they felt to be mischievous to Anglican loyalty. The result, however, was not satisfactory, whether we have regard to the intrinsic quality of the translation itself or to its popular appeal. It is, however, important, since it was the Bible recognized by Convocation and used in the services of the Church, and also because it was the standard text from which the makers of the Authorized Version were instructed to depart only when necessity required, an instruction which, happily, they interpreted liberally. Finally, I have to mention the Roman Catholic translation of the New Testament made at Rheims in 1582. The translation of the Old Testament made at Douai in 1610 appeared too late to be used in the preparation of the Authorized Version, but the Rheims New Testament exerted a deep influence upon it, perhaps not always to its advantage, though some elements of strength were certainly derived from it. The extent of our debt to this Roman Catholic rendering may be seen in Dr. J. G. Carleton's elaborate work, *The Part of Rheims in the Making of the English Bible.*

It is important to recognize quite clearly that the Authorized Version is itself a comparatively recent work which is the outcome of repeated revision of earlier translations. It is not yet four centuries since the Bible was translated from Hebrew and Greek into English. It is little more than five centuries since a complete Bible in any form has been made accessible to the English public. The fact is too often overlooked, that the English Bible, which has for so long held an unchallenged supremacy, was issued little more than

300 years ago, less than one-sixth of the period which separates us from the time of Christ. The preparation of this version was due, as all men know, to a suggestion made by Dr. Reynolds at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604. James I found this request far more congenial than anything else the Puritans had to urge, for he was quite in his element in such an enterprise as this, to which, moreover, he was the more readily inclined that he had a strong dislike for the Geneva Version, which was at the time the most popular. Ultimately forty-seven translators were appointed, who were divided into three companies, which met at Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster respectively. As already mentioned, their work was based on the Bishops' Bible, but other translations were employed, especially the Geneva Version and the Rheims New Testament. It is an interesting fact that Fulke published the New Testament according to the Bishops' Bible and the Rheims Version in parallel columns, and if the Bishops' Bible was used in this edition the great influence of the Roman Catholic rendering on the Authorized Version may be explained. But it should be stated explicitly that while earlier translations were employed, the makers of the Authorized Version had the Bible in the original languages continually before them, and strove to give a rendering which should be faithful to the sense of the Hebrew and Greek. Apparently the actual work did not begin till about 1607, but it was completed in 1611. Although it popularly bears the title 'The Authorized Version,' no evidence that it ever was authorized exists, although a strong case may be made out for the view that its title is justifiably borne. But what secured for it its victory over all rival versions and its undisputed pre-eminence was its own intrinsic excellence and indisputable superiority.

Coming at the end of a series, it sought to combine the excellences of all and avoid the faults which criticism had detected in its predecessors. It was also fortunate in that it united the advantages of individual with those of collective translation. Ultimately it went back to Tyndale and Coverdale. Each of these had his characteristic excellences, but each also his limitations. The Geneva Version, on the other hand, was prepared by a number of scholars, and similarly the Bishops' Bible. The Authorized Version itself was the work of three committees revised by a supervising committee. The value of collective revision is that the eccentricities of individual translators are pruned and their defects made good, while each contributes something positive to the common stock. Another element of superiority to some of the best versions which had preceded was the absence of controversial notes. The Geneva Bible on the one hand, the Rheims New Testament on the other, took sides so strongly in their marginal annotation that their constituency was greatly limited. It was obviously impossible for a translation of the Bible to be used by an Arminian Anglican which was deeply tinged with Calvinism or opposition to prelacy. In a version intended for universal use the only safe and proper rule was to make it colourless so far as theological or ecclesiastical difference was concerned. This was so successfully accomplished by the Authorized Version that, though it had to meet with bitter opposition for a time, it was before long so fully accepted, both by Anglican and by Puritan, that even the Geneva Version, its most formidable rival, has been practically dead for more than two hundred years. It had its defects, it is true. The science of textual criticism had not yet been born, and the materials for constructing a sound text have been considerably augmented since

that time. In the Old Testament, indeed, much still remains to be done before we have even approximately recovered the original Hebrew. The scholarship of the Old Testament translators was of a somewhat Rabbinical kind, and great advance has since been made in the grammars and lexicons of the sacred languages as well as in Biblical exegesis and knowledge of the contemporary conditions. The division into verses, which, of course, it shared with some earlier translations, has been a grave hindrance to the apprehension of the meaning, and seriously obscured the logical movement of the thought. The summaries prefixed to the chapters have put many false opinions into circulation. Moreover, a certain tendency to tone down difficulties and to eliminate what might cause offence is also to be noticed. To this it must be added that the renderings are in too many instances barely intelligible, that the more delicate shades of meaning are not brought out with precision, and that the translation is too often incorrect. The principle which was deliberately followed of using a variety of English words to render the same Hebrew or Greek term, and the opposite practice of using the same English term to render several different words in the original, has made the task of those Bible students, who know no Hebrew or Greek, far more difficult by suggesting parallels where they do not exist and making it impossible to trace many parallels which the original texts actually present. I am aware that the practice of using the same translation for the same word ought not to be rigidly pressed, since it also may in some instances give misleading results. But it is indefensible to vary the rendering at haphazard, and change of rendering should be permitted only on carefully-considered grounds.

But while these and other defects may not unjustly

be urged against the Authorized Version they are not such as to lessen our appreciation of the splendid achievement it was. The scholarship of the translators was the best of their time, they worked on the original texts and used all the helps that were accessible to them. The period was favourable to their enterprise. It was a time of spiritual and intellectual exaltation. New realms in literature, in philosophy, and in art had been recovered at the revival of learning. The Reformation had snapped the yoke of Rome, vindicating the right of private judgment, setting the individual conscience free, securing to each immediate access to God. The discovery of the New World had expanded the horizon, opening up new and hitherto unimagined vistas. The problems of theology engaged widespread and serious attention; religion was the subject of an interest at once deep and intense. It was in no stagnant atmosphere that the men of those days lived. The Spirit swept over England like a rushing mighty wind. The air was charged with electricity, the elements met in the shock of war, men drank delight of battle, or, with still nobler courage, laid down their lives for the truth. The heroism of conflict, the finer heroism of martyrdom had touched the spirits of men with a deeper seriousness or thrilled them with a keen and high elation. The dread of a Spanish conquest had passed away, never to return, the stir and exhilaration of that spacious age had found its fit expression in our most splendid literature. And as the climax of all this marvellous movement, there came the supreme English classic, the Authorized Version.

What then are the qualities which conspire to enthrone this book in its position of unquestioned supremacy? In the first place it is so admirable a translation that it reads as if it were an original work. Of

course, it must be remembered that the Bible passes the test of translation very well. Moreover, as Tyndale saw, English forms an excellent medium for conveying the qualities of the original languages. He says: 'The Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with the Latin.' But while English is so excellently adapted for the purpose, it would be only too easy to produce a translation of Scripture which would bear its foreign extraction all too clearly upon it. And perhaps in fairness one ought to admit that the Authorized Version has made some idioms seem native to us which on their first introduction must have sounded somewhat strange. Yet, when all is said, the translation is a triumph of the highest kind. Its authors spared no pains, but their work does not smell of the midnight oil. It is faithful without being unduly literal or pedantic. It is easy and graceful, not crabbed and uncouth. Happily it is not filled, like the Rhemish New Testament, with unintelligible Latinisms and technical ecclesiasticisms. It was written so that the common people might read it gladly, in language that was at once simple and homely, racy and picturesque. Yet it does not carry this racy, homely quality to an excess; it does not sink below the level of its subject matter. There is in it a noble splendour and dignity, a purity and felicity, a sense of satisfying rhythm and melodious harmony, an easy grace, a diction nervous and flexible, which have made it not only an English classic of the first rank, but the joy, the inspiration and comfort of multitudes upon multitudes in age after age through these three hundred years. Scripture is indeed so quick and powerful, stored with such radiant energy, that through the most imperfect medium its light

and heat will be conveyed. But it is a great mistake to imagine that the facts and the ideas are all that matter, while the expression may safely be neglected. The inspiration of the original does not reside simply in the subject matter, it touches the form in which it was given. And similarly no translation can do justice to the Bible unless the expression is on a level with the thought. The beauty and the power would be largely lost if clothed in a mean and ill-fitting dress. It has been of the greatest value to us that through so many generations the religion of the English people has been nurtured on a translation of Scripture which is throughout of the highest literary quality.

It is at present uncertain whether the Authorized Version will succeed in maintaining its position. As yet the Revised Version seems not to have proved a serious competitor in the affections of the English-speaking people. It is in many respects more accurate than the Authorized Version, but in the New Testament the changes have been felt by multitudes to go far beyond what was required. Largely, of course, it is a question of what we want. If we want beautiful literature with choice diction, felicitous phrasing, and exquisite rhythm, a strong case can be made out for retaining the Authorized Version. If, however, it is our main concern to have a text as pure and a translation as accurate as possible, I do not doubt that the Revised Version is superior when judged by this test. There can hardly be any dispute that a translation of Scripture must above all things aim at fidelity. If we are to be faithful to its teaching we must know with exactness what it says, and those who cannot go to the original for themselves ought to be brought as close as possible to its actual language. In the nature of things a translation must be imperfect, for words in one lan-

guage often have no precise equivalent in another, and a construction barbarous in one idiom may be quite legitimate in another. Even when the best has been done much imperfection must inevitably remain. The Revised Version has often suffered injustice since people have felt the familiar rhythm to be unquestionably better than the unfamiliar. The charge is probably much exaggerated and partly the effect of an illusion. It is quite an open question whether one who had been brought up on the Revised Version and turned for the first time to the Authorized might not urge against the latter that it had less English felicity than the former. No doubt many ardent Anglican admirers of the Authorized Version would prefer to its version of the Psalms that in the Prayer Book, simply because they are better acquainted with it, whereas the Free Churchman would probably marvel at the preference. The familiar rhythm is often changed. But this need not mean that the new version may not have as good a rhythm of its own ; but it takes time to become used to it, to get the run of it, so to speak, and this is often forgotten by those in a hurry to judge. At the same time, while in many respects I think that the Revised Version marked a great advance, especially in the more difficult portions of Scripture, such as the poetry and prophecy in the Old Testament and the Epistles in the New Testament, I doubt whether it is built for permanence. I do not believe that the time is ripe for attempting a new revision. I think, indeed, that it was not ripe when the revision was actually made. Much preliminary work still remains to be done. Textual criticism is in a very unsettled condition, so far as the New Testament is concerned ; while the textual criticism of the Old Testament is in a quite rudimentary stage. The new light which is being thrown by the

recently-discovered papyri on the vocabulary and the grammar of the New Testament may be confidently expected to illuminate much that is still dark and settle much that is doubtful. It is by no means unlikely that the discovery of Hebrew documents may make the Old Testament much clearer to us. Biblical exegesis has made not a little progress in recent years, but it would be quite a mistake to suppose that nothing more remained to be done. When a revision is again undertaken we may anticipate that the help of stylists as well as of scholars will be secured. Meanwhile, something may be done by the dissemination of unofficial translations. These have at least this value that they shock the reader out of that deadening familiarity, which is one of the worst enemies to appreciation of the Bible. The English reader is so familiar with the Authorized Version, that the words of Scripture skim easily over the surface of his consciousness, losing the bite which they really possess. This may be counteracted by the study of an entirely new translation. But no student should neglect the constant use of the Revised Version unless he is able to go back to the original for himself. Yet whatever the future may have in store for us, we cannot be other than grateful as we look back over the past, and remember the splendid history of the Authorized Version. For three centuries it has been the educator of all the English-speaking peoples, the source from which the vast majority have drawn most of the liberal culture they have possessed. It has familiarized them with great ideas greatly spoken, widened their outlook, and enriched their thought. But it has been far more than this, a true river of water of life bringing to us cleansing, refreshment and peace. Of all the gifts which have made our nation great, the most precious has been the gift of the English Bible.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF THE CANON

So far I have been speaking of the Bible as if we were all quite agreed what we mean by the term ; but now it is necessary to deal with this question more definitely, and to ask, what do we embrace under that designation ? In this connexion there are two problems which confront us. The first is : By what stages have the individual books been formed into a single collection ? What motives governed this process and what qualifications were required to fit a book for the position accorded to it ? The second question is : How far have the Biblical writings been correctly transmitted to us ? or, How far do our manuscripts diverge from what the authors actually wrote ? The latter of these questions raises the problem of the Text, the former the problem of the Canon. It is a familiar fact that the Christian Churches have differed, and still differ, very considerably on the question what limits should be set to the Canon of Scripture. And the more rigid our doctrine of inspiration the more necessary it is for us to have a clear idea with reference to what is and what is not the inspired Word of God.

The history of the Old Testament Canon is extremely obscure. We know very little about it, though we can form some probable conjectures to eke out what slender information we possess. Many of my readers will probably be familiar with the threefold division

of the Hebrew Canon—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Such a division at once strikes those who are familiar only with the English Bible as strange, inasmuch as the Prophets hold the second place and not the last in order. Then they would naturally suppose that the Law embraced the Pentateuch; the Prophets, the four Major and twelve Minor Prophets, as we unhappily call them, together with the Book of Lamentations; and that all the rest of the Old Testament would be included in the Writings. But in this they would be quite mistaken. The section entitled 'the Prophets' embraces both more and less than the seventeen books I have named. It embraces more, inasmuch as some of the books that we are wont to count historical are reckoned among the Prophets. And yet not all of these, for only Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings belong to this second division, in which they are distinguished from the prophetic writings in the narrower sense by being called the Former Prophets. It is a point of some moment that these books which we are wont to call historical the Jews themselves regarded as prophetic. And this is a description of them that would repay consideration. The other books which we are accustomed to class as historical—namely, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles—are not only placed among the Writings but are found at the very end of the Hebrew Bible, one very striking fact being that, although Ezra and Nehemiah are a continuation of Chronicles, the chronological order is not followed in their arrangement in the Canon, but the Hebrew Bible closes with the Books of Chronicles. Moreover, the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible include less than the Prophets in the English Bible, for in the latter the Books of Daniel and Lamentations are treated as prophetic, whereas in the Hebrew

Bible they are classed with the Writings. The third division is of a very composite character. It includes Psalms, Job, and Proverbs, all three of which are poetical books; then what are known as the five rolls, the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther; and finally the Books of Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah, and Chronicles. It will thus be observed that the contents of this third division are somewhat miscellaneous. We have poetical writings, such as the Psalms, the Lamentations, the Song of Songs, the Book of Proverbs, and the Book of Job. The two latter belong, in point of subject-matter, to what is known as the Wisdom literature of the Hebrews, to which Ecclesiastes also belongs. Ruth and Esther contain biography rather than history, but Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles are historical writings.

This threefold division, which is expressed alike in the title and the arrangement of the Hebrew Bible, is found as early as the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, which was probably written shortly before 130 B.C. In that work we have the Law and the Prophets referred to under these titles, but the third division is described by different forms of expression as though no title had been devised for it. Thus the writer speaks of the many things which 'have been delivered unto us by the Law and the Prophets and by the others that have followed upon them.' Again he refers to Jesus, his grandfather, as having devoted himself to 'the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of the fathers.' And later he says, referring to the translation into Greek, 'The Law itself and the Prophets, and the rest of the books, have no small difference when they are spoken in their own language.' It has been inferred with some justice that, while the Law and the Prophets were titles of collections definitely fixed, this was not the

case with the final collection. In fact the author's language suggests that the limits of this division were still rather fluid.

On what principle then, it may be asked, was the division made? It can hardly have been based simply on considerations of subject-matter. The third portion of the Canon contained historical books that might have been naturally combined with Judges, Samuel, and Kings, while Daniel might naturally have been placed among the Prophets. How fitting both of these arrangements would have been is shown by the fact that the versions, including the English version, actually set aside the Hebrew arrangement and introduced one of their own in which this more appropriate division in accordance with subject-matter was effected. Why then, was this not done in the first instance? The most obvious answer is that when the second Canon was completed these books, which would properly have found a place within it, were either not written or were not regarded as canonical. The former alternative should probably be accepted with reference to Daniel, the latter with reference to Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, since the Book of Daniel would presumably have been included with the Prophets had it been known to the compilers of that collection. We may assume with some measure of likelihood that this collection was already closed before the middle of the second century B.C., inasmuch as the Book of Daniel seems to have been written about the year 165 B.C. We may probably go back somewhat earlier, and take it that the second Canon was substantially completed by the close of the third century B.C. We may regard the great assembly at which the Law was read and accepted in the time of Nehemiah, according to the usual view in the year 444 B.C., as stamping the final stratum of the

Law with the same canonical authority which the Deuteronomic Code had received in the reign of Josiah, 621 B.C. But we should probably place at a somewhat later point the literary compilation of the Pentateuch in its present form.

We have no positive evidence enabling us to determine when the third collection was completed. Probably it contains some elements later even than the Book of Daniel—namely, some of the Psalms and the Book of Esther. I do not think, however, that there is any need for us to follow those scholars who bring down the dates of many of the Psalms into the first century B.C. We do not possess any evidence which definitely settles the question when this collection was formed. The greater part of it was apparently recognized as fully canonical before the time of Christ, but it is well known that the canonicity of certain books was in dispute towards the close of the first century of the Christian era. This was notably the case with Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Esther, and Ezekiel. The last of these was questioned on account of the difficulty experienced in reconciling the legislative sketch in the closing chapters of his book with the legislation in the Pentateuch. This difficulty was surmounted by the heroic efforts of Hananiah, who, with the help of three hundred measures of midnight oil, succeeded in reconciling the two. The practical problem seems not so much to have been whether it was canonical, but whether it was wise to read it in the synagogues. Ecclesiastes was suspected since it contained apparently heretical statements and self-contradictions; Esther because it omitted the name of God; the Song of Songs probably on account of its theme. It is a matter of dispute whether these books were already in the Canon, and the debate which went on into the second century

of our era turned on the question of their removal, or whether they were candidates for admission, and the discussion centred round the proposal to accept them. My own judgment leans rather towards the latter interpretation in the case of Ecclesiastes, Esther, and the Song of Songs.

But another point emerges. The Septuagint includes a considerable number of books which are not in the Hebrew Canon, and these are the so-called Apocrypha. It is questionable, however, it we can infer from this fact that the Greek-speaking Jews included these books in their Bible. It is possible that they regarded the writings as profitable without attributing to them canonical authority. The Canon recognized by Josephus was apparently identical with our own Old Testament, and he regards himself as speaking in this matter for all Jews. What books were recognized by Philo of Alexandria is uncertain. Apparently he does not quote the Apocrypha, but there are several Old Testament books to which no reference is made in his writings, so that we cannot feel the same confidence with reference to him as with reference to Josephus.

But the question what books the Jews included in their Bible, while very important, is after all not decisive for ourselves. This does not mean that we must without more ado cast aside the books which attained full canonical rank only at the Synod of Jamnia, held by the Rabbis after the Destruction of Jerusalem. We may find principles on which we may as Christians consistently admit them, though they would be principles of a different kind from those on which the Rabbis acted. What is meant is that we cannot accept the infallibility of their decisions, but must test them for ourselves. The final settlement of the Hebrew Canon

was the work of men who rejected the claims of Jesus, and were probably not in all respects in line with their national tradition in this matter. It is, indeed, fortunate that the Scribes did not have the formation of the Canon altogether in their own hands. They were driven to accept books, which on their principles would have been excluded, by the fact that devout Jews found their spiritual life nurtured by them. They did not get matters completely into their own hands till after the Destruction of Jerusalem. We are interested by the question, What Bible was recognized by Jesus and the New Testament writers? This is a question which cannot be answered with certainty. In the main there can be no doubt that it was identical with the Hebrew Canon as we now possess it. But books were quoted which are not in the Canon. Jude refers to the Book of Enoch as giving us an authentic prophecy of that patriarch. He probably had before him also the Assumption of Moses. It is possible that Paul quotes in 1 Corinthians from an Apocryphal work, and the same may be true of the First Epistle of Peter. It is by no means certain that such a quotation was not made by Christ Himself.

And in the Church itself the range of the Old Testament was certainly extended beyond that recognized by the Hebrews. In particular, as is well known, the Roman Church attributes canonical authority to the Apocrypha. Protestant writers have generally held to the Hebrew books as alone inspired and authoritative. It is difficult, however, to regard the distinction in many cases as other than arbitrary. For example, it is hard to find any principle worthy of consideration which would justify the inclusion of Esther and the exclusion of the First Book of Maccabees, or the inclusion of Ecclesiastes and exclusion of Ecclesiasticus

and the Wisdom of Solomon. And this is by no means an exhaustive statement of the case. It must, of course, be understood that the Canon might be so defined as to warrant such a distinction. But this raises the question which we are not yet in a position to discuss: In what sense can we speak of the Old Testament as possessing Canonical authority for ourselves with our more modern view of Scripture? At present I am speaking of it from the older point of view. But at least I may illustrate my point by a reference to 1 Maccabees, that it may be clear how admirably it meets some of the qualifications which are often put forward to justify the inclusion of books in the Old Testament. The story which it records is the most stirring of any in the long roll of Israel's romantic history. It tells us of a people faithful to the uttermost to their Law, and in the strength of their faith doing deeds of heroism, and turning to flight armies of aliens in a way that illustrated, as no other episode in their history, the power of heroic faith in God. As a lesson of fidelity to duty and conviction which overcame the fear of man, and of the faith that gave victory against overwhelming odds, the record is precious for all time. Not only so, but like the historical books of the Old Testament it has great importance in that it helps us to understand the historical circumstances out of which precious monuments of God's revelation sprang. How helpful is the light it throws on Daniel and the Maccabean Psalms! But we may go a step further. How great is the importance of this period of Jewish history for Christianity itself! For it was the deliberate aim of Antiochus Epiphanes to extirpate Judaism, and, humanly speaking, that would have meant the nullification of all God's long preparation for the sending of his Son. And the religious life of the Judaism of Christ's own day

also receives illumination from the history of this time, for in it we find the source of powerful tendencies which meet us everywhere in the Gospel history.

In view of the fact that the Apocryphal books are all in Greek, some have thought that this is an argument against their canonicity, since a canonical Old Testament book should be written in Hebrew. This is an amazing opinion. In the first place, as I have previously mentioned, parts of the Old Testament are written not in Hebrew but in Aramaic. In the next place some of the Apocrypha, although they are preserved only in Greek, were originally written in Hebrew. Lastly, the fact that the New Testament is entirely written in Greek ought to have prevented such a suicidal argument from being put forward. Besides, it is surely obvious that the canonicity of a Biblical book must depend on something other than the mere language in which it was written. It would hardly be worth while mentioning this if it did not illustrate the well-known fact that people will gravely allege arguments to prove their particular theories of Scripture, which they would never dream of suggesting in any other department of research.

But the difficulties are by no means confined to the Old Testament Canon. Several of the New Testament books were disputed for centuries. The whole or portions of the Catholic Epistles have been rejected, so also the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse. On the other hand, some books, such as the First Epistle of Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Epistle of Barnabas, were looked upon by several early Christian writers as canonical. Into the details of this it is quite unnecessary to go. But several centuries elapsed before the disputes about the Canon came to an end. And it is a question how far we are bound by

the decisions on this point reached at so late a period in the history of the Church.

It is at least worth our while to recall the attitude of the Reformers on this question. Luther shook the world, but he did not do it by a timid adherence to Catholic principles. He confronted the Roman system with the New Testament, but towards the New Testament itself he took up an attitude of great freedom. He was a Biblical critic in his way, and spoke with astonishing freedom about some parts of the New Testament. Comparing the Epistle of James with the New Testament books that he regarded as of primary importance, he characterized it as 'a right strawy Epistle compared with them, for it has no character of the Gospel in it.' He says, 'It contradicts St. Paul and all other Scripture in giving righteousness to works.' His test of a book was that it should preach and urge Christ; 'It is the duty of a true Apostle to preach Christ's sufferings and Resurrection.' This test the Epistle of James did not satisfy. 'It teaches Christian people, and yet does not once notice the Passion, the Resurrection, the Spirit of Christ.' The Epistle to the Hebrews he refused to place on a level with the Apostolic Epistles, and hints that wood, straw, and hay were to be found in it. Jude, also, he did not reckon among the capital books which ought to lay the foundation of faith. He brought the New Testament books to the touchstone of agreement with the doctrines he had learned from Paul. If they taught the Gospel as he understood it, they were to be fully accepted; if not, their authority must be denied.

The other Reformers were also bold in their attitude, and the greatest Biblical scholar of them all, Calvin, put his objections in a more scientific form than Luther. It was only after the freshness and initial force of the

Reformation had spent itself, and it was when against the Roman attack the Lutheran and Reformed Churches were driven to seek for infallible authority to pit against an infallible Church that they took the backward step of asserting infallible Scripture. They did not trust the Gospel enough, and therefore needed to buttress it by an external authority. Now that we have shaken ourselves free once more, we must not suffer ourselves to be again entangled.

The subject of this book is the Bible, and it would seem at first sight to be self-explanatory. Every one, it may be said, knows what the Bible is. But by this time it will have become clear that the matter is not so simple. We shall see that we cannot be sure in multitudes of cases what the exact wording of Scripture is, and some of these cases are by no means unimportant. And if this is so with the Text, the problem of the Canon is even more serious. For those on whom the duty of compiling the Canon fell have been by no means agreed as to the books which should be inserted and those which should be excluded. The Bible with which we are familiar holds its position with ourselves in virtue of long usage. But if one of the early Fathers came back, knowing nothing of the intervening development, he would probably find some things to criticize in our hard-and-fast selection. He might condemn us for including the Epistle to the Hebrews, or the Apocalypse, or the Second Epistle of Peter; or he might find fault with the omission of the Epistle of Barnabas, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, or the Shepherd of Hermas. We may be thankful that the task of the defender of Scripture has not been made more difficult by the inclusion of some of these books. And yet we might find it hard to justify to antiquity the choice embodied in our Eng-

lish Bible. It has been necessary to emphasize these considerations, not because it is any pleasure to disturb long-settled and cherished opinions, but because we must see as clearly as possible the conditions which have to be taken into account in constructing our theory of Scripture. It is perhaps clear already that a revision of old-fashioned opinions is inevitable in the logic of the situation.

CHAPTER VI

THE LOWER CRITICISM

In Mr. A. E. Waite's fascinating and instructive volume *Studies in Mysticism*, the following sentences occur: 'Interpretations of this order are not less unprofitable to the soul than the enlightenments of the Higher Criticism—which are understood to have failed. Very likely the Lower Criticism—if that means ordinary church teaching—has failed after its own manner; but there are greater issues outside these alternatives.' The maxim that the cobbler should not go beyond his last is rarely transgressed by Mr. Waite, and it seems ungrateful to quote this momentary aberration against him. We may well ask, however, 'if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' The answer is writ large in the books on Biblical criticism by authors whose qualifications for their task are of the slenderest. For the most part indeed, they betray no knowledge that such a thing as Lower Criticism exists, and the term Higher Criticism they habitually misuse. This term, though already familiar in other branches of literary science, was first used with reference to Scripture by Eichhorn in the closing years of the eighteenth century. It was intended to distinguish one department of investigation from another. The Lower, or Formal, or Textual Criticism was concerned with restoring to its original state, so far as might be, the text of an author. When the student proceeded to

investigate questions of the date and authorship, the structure and literary analysis of his documents, the name given to the field of science that he cultivated was the Higher Criticism. As it turns out, the introduction of this name has led to much misunderstanding. Owing to the fact that its companion discipline has commonly been known as Textual rather than as Lower Criticism, the antithesis implied in Higher has been rarely understood. It has been foolishly supposed by many to express the attitude of a conscious superiority arrogantly assumed by those who have broken with traditional views. Hence we often read of ' the so-called Higher Criticism.' This reminds me of the popular preacher who ruined his glowing peroration by a scathing reference to ' the boasted progress of this so-called nineteenth century.' And it has come to be so commonly identified with opinions opposed to the traditional views, that when I have asked beginners to define Lower Criticism and Higher Criticism, my experience is that nine out of ten, never having heard of Lower Criticism before, imagine that it is a label for the set of opinions as to the authorship of Biblical Books which has been common in the Church, and that Higher Criticism implies the rejection of those views. This is a complete mistake. The names indicate a difference in the range of investigation. They have nothing to do with the results reached. In fact, the subject-matter of both is entirely different, and therefore they cannot come into conflict in their results except in those rather rare cases where the one department of science insensibly passes into the other, as an instance of which I might refer to the authenticity of the last twelve verses in the Gospel of Mark.

For example, Ferdinand Christian Baur reached the result that only four of the Epistles ascribed to Paul

were written by him. Many other scholars have concluded that all the Epistles ascribed to him were his work. But so far as both attempt by reasoned inquiry into the facts to attain a conclusion, so far all are critics, whether they come to one result or the other.

If a man seeks by scientific scholarship and reasoned argument to prove that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, he is practising Higher Criticism just as much as the man who seeks, by the same methods, to disprove its Mosaic authorship; the only difference is that one is bad and the other is sound Higher Criticism. It is true that all this ought not to need explanation, for it has been explained times enough already, but the error is so deep-seated that a brief explanation cannot be superfluous.

Of the Higher Criticism I shall have to speak later. Meanwhile it may suffice to say that it is the science which investigates the age of individual books, asks whether a book is the work of a single author, and if so to what author it belongs and to what date; if not, what documents may be detected in it, how may the analysis into its original elements be effected, and to what dates should they be assigned? The Lower Criticism occupies a preliminary stage. It seeks to ascertain whether the text we now possess corresponds with that which the author actually wrote, and, where we have different texts, to decide between them. Finally, where we have reason to believe that the true text has not been preserved at all, it attempts to work back to the original as nearly as can be done.

No doubt it comes on many readers with a sense of shock that any discussion as to the accurate transmission of the text should be raised. The average reader of the Bible, even if he is willing to admit that he must go back to the Hebrew or the Greek for the

immediately inspired word of God, is nevertheless inclined to suppose that once the original languages have been reached all debate is at an end. Now such a claim that we possess an exact copy of the original writings might appeal with some show of reason to the plea that God would naturally take special precautions to protect the transmission of this literature from all chance of error. It is very instructive to have this natural anticipation placed clearly before us, for it affords an excellent object-lesson on the danger of permitting our views to be formed in harmony with our opinions of what is fitting rather than in deference to the actual facts.

To these facts I have already drawn attention. It might, in view of the great unanimity of the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, be argued with apparent plausibility that a special Divine Providence had worked the perpetual miracle of preserving the text from damage. But it will hardly be possible for a Christian to adopt this position, since such a miracle has certainly not been worked in the case of the New Testament, where the various readings mount up to many thousands. It is indeed a demonstrable fact that the text of the New Testament, which has been current in Christendom for a millennium and a half, contains a very large number of deviations from the original. No Christian could consistently admit that Providence extended a miraculous oversight to the preservation of the Hebrew text which He has withheld from the far more important Scriptures of the New Covenant.

This, however, does not settle the question of fact; it simply warns us that we must beware of invoking Divine intervention to guarantee the purity of the Hebrew text. It is quite possible that the Hebrews

were more careful of their Scriptures than Christians have been, and thus have preserved them intact. And in favour of this it may be urged that the care which the Jews have shown in this respect is notorious. They took the most amazing precautions to secure by an elaborate system of calculations and checks the literal accuracy of the copies that they made. The labour which they undertook was of a stupendous character and must have extended over scores of years.

But there is such a thing as locking the stable door after the horse has been stolen, and unfortunately the history of the text of the Old Testament presents us with an illustration of that proverb. The Jews took elaborate precautions to prevent the corruption of the text when such corruption had run riot for several centuries. The oldest dated Hebrew manuscript that we possess is not earlier than A.D. 916. The work of the Massoretes, who accomplished the mighty task which was intended to secure the minute accuracy of the text, may be dated within the period covered by the sixth to the eighth centuries after Christ. By other means it is true we can follow back the present Hebrew text substantially to the second century A.D. But think what this means. There is first of all a period of many centuries lying between the earliest date to which we can trace our present text and the actual composition of many Old Testament books. Amos, for example, prophesied about the middle of the eighth century B.C., but there is an interval of something like nine hundred years between his lifetime and the earliest date at which we can discover the Hebrew text in its present form, and more than sixteen hundred years before the earliest Hebrew manuscript that we possess. How great, then, was the chance that in this earlier period many errors might creep into the copies of the prophet's

writings! And the probability of this is greatly enhanced by the many catastrophes which overtook Israel and Judah. First there was the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom, which may very well have been a literary calamity of the first magnitude. Then there was the downfall of the Southern Kingdom and the destruction of Jerusalem, followed by the Babylonian captivity in the early years of the sixth century B.C. Later, there came the terrible Maccabean persecution, in which the Scriptures were specially singled out for annihilation. Lastly, there was the second destruction of Jerusalem and the slaughter of vast multitudes of Jews, followed in about sixty years by the revolt under Bar-Kochba, which entailed a fearful vengeance on the unhappy people.

It is, however, no mere speculation that our copies are often incorrect. There are many cases where the text gives no proper sense, where in fact it can be translated only by violence to grammar or where some words have evidently dropped out. For example, if we look at the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel xiii. 1 we read the extraordinary statement 'Saul was a year old when he began to reign and he reigned two years over Israel.' In other cases we have the same passage occurring in two different parts of the Old Testament. When they are compared together we meet with divergences. Some of these are of course deliberate alterations, but in other cases the only reasonable explanation is that one of the texts is corrupt. Lastly, we have the evidence of the ancient translations, especially the early Greek version, known as the Septuagint, which seems to have been completed before the time of Christ. This differs very much from the Hebrew. In a large number of instances the Hebrew text is unquestionably superior, but this is by no means always the case. It is in fact

quite clear to any unprejudiced student that the Septuagint has frequently preserved the better reading. And this is all the more significant in view of the fact that many of the New Testament writers quote the Old Testament according to the Septuagint and not according to the Hebrew. It should also be added that the Greek evidence is earlier than the Hebrew. Similarly, the other versions occasionally preserve a text superior to our present Hebrew text.

But, in view of the fact that a long interval lies between the age of many of the Biblical writers and the earliest literary attestation we have for them in any form, we must be prepared to face the possibility that in many cases neither the Hebrew nor the versions preserve the original text. If so, we have what will to many seem the difficult situation, that some things which have passed for the inspired utterances of historian, prophet, or Psalmist, are really only the mistake of some scribe. But scholars are almost all agreed that this has actually happened in not a few places, and that the true text, unless it can be restored by successful conjecture, is irretrievably lost. Such a contingency may appear distressing, for it is unnecessary to insist how precarious the process of mending the text by conjecture must be. Its significance will have to be estimated at a later point; meanwhile it will suffice to say that, while I consider it to have an important bearing on the general view we take of the Bible, and particularly of its inspiration, it leaves the real value of Scripture practically untouched.

It is not necessary to deal at any length with the question of the New Testament. As I have already pointed out, the immense number of various readings assures us that the true text is likely to be preserved somewhere and a learned and judicious criticism may

in numerous instances successfully restore it. At the same time it is necessary to remember that in many cases the best critics are divided between two or more readings, the claims of which seem to be fairly evenly balanced. Accordingly, when we have done our best, some element of uncertainty must remain. Moreover, we must also remember that passages which at one time were regarded as unquestionable portions of Scripture are now by common consent looked upon as spurious.

Nor is it necessary for me to treat in more than outline the sources of corruption, the methods which may be employed to detect it or to heal it when it has been discovered. Sometimes corruption has been caused by the similarity of letters in sound or in appearance, at other times by the rubbing off of the ink. Sometimes, when the same word occurred twice, the scribe would copy down to its first occurrence, and then his eye would light on the second, and the intervening matter would be omitted. At other times the opposite mistake would happen, and he would write down to the second, and his eye would then light on the first and he would write the intervening words twice over. Sometimes words or letters would get in their wrong order, at other times abbreviations would be misunderstood. There was also at one time no division made between the words, and when the division was effected it might be made at the wrong place. Or the scribe might be careless or sleepy, and mistakes be introduced in this way. It would often happen that when errors were introduced the text would not make sense. This would be discovered by the next copyist, and he would naturally seek to restore it to its original form, but his attempt would be very likely to be unsuccessful, and new errors would thus be occasioned. Another rather frequent source of corruption was the intru-

sion of marginal comments, or, as they are technically called, glosses. Some reader would make a comment in the margin of his manuscript, and then a scribe would put it in the text under the impression that it had been accidentally omitted from it. Even when the scribe accidentally omitted a word or clause and then tried to repair his mistake by putting the omitted words in the margin it was quite easy for the later scribe who restored them to the text to insert them at the wrong point. If, for example, more columns than one were on a page and the words in question were placed between the columns they might be reinserted in the wrong column. Finally we have to allow for deliberate alteration. Harsh expressions would be toned down, what was felt to be theologically objectionable would be harmonized with more conventional modes of expression, what seemed to be too daring would be replaced by something tamer. Jewish tradition itself reckons eighteen of these so-called ' corrections of the scribes,' but probably they were really much more numerous.

How then, it may be asked, are we to get back to the original text ? The critic must prepare himself for his work by a thorough familiarity with the causes of corruption such as I have already sketched and with the different types of corruption. In the second place he must be familiar with the history of the Hebrew alphabet, since letters which were clearly distinguished in one stage of its history might be easily confounded in another. In certain cases he may receive help from rhythm, but unfortunately not so much as in our own or other Western languages. The problem of Hebrew metre is at present in a very unsettled condition, though some critics freely correct the text where it does not correspond to what their metrical theories require. Abnormal length or abnormal brevity may reasonably be

considered an indication of corruption, but it is scarcely safe to go beyond this at present. Much help, however, may often be derived from the parallelism which is so characteristic of Hebrew poetry. All readers will be familiar with the way in which the two lines of a couplet answer each other in sense. For example:

> He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man:
> He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

In many cases the attentive reader is arrested by a deviation from the parallelism he would have anticipated. This, it is true, may not imply any error in the text, but it frequently happens that a slight alteration will restore a satisfying parallelism. In that case the correction has a certain measure of probability. Again, the ancient versions, especially the Septuagint, are most helpful. Where they preserve a clearly better text they should be preferred, even though the precise retranslation into Hebrew may be uncertain. But that is by no means the limit of their helpfulness. For the text of a version may be clearly incorrect, but it may help to restore the original, since when it is retranslated into Hebrew it is often possible by slight alterations to secure a text which has all the marks of originality. This, of course, is a form of emendation by conjecture. But it is not pure conjecture. Inasmuch, however, as we have every reason to suppose that there are many instances where the true text is preserved neither in the original nor in the translation, we must, if we are to restore it, have recourse to conjecture. In the New Testament the range of such emendation is very limited in view of the immense amount of evidence that we possess; but in the Old Testament it is impossible to exclude it, though it need hardly be

said that it must be reserved for thoroughly equipped scholars.

This chapter is not intended to be a mere disquisition on the Textual Criticism of the Bible. That would have been outside the scope of this work. But it raises a question which is vital to our investigation. It forces home upon us the large measure of uncertainty which gathers about the problem, How far does the Bible which we possess represent the original utterances of its authors?

Our reluctance to admit the presence of errors will vary with the rigour of our theory of inspiration; but we are warned to be cautious when we remember that men have often dogmatically asserted the verbal inspiration of a passage which is demonstrably corrupt. But if our theory of inspiration is more flexible, we are not relieved of the duty of determining exactly what the authors wrote whenever this is possible. It is, I fear, a vain dream to hope that we shall ever succeed in restoring the original text in every detail. God has not judged the exact transmission of the Scriptures of sufficient importance to secure them miraculously from error.

Such studies as these are of the greatest value. They have at once a chastening and a reassuring influence. They prune away the rash and confident dogmatism of inexperience and teach that sober self-distrust, which is, in criticism, the beginning of wisdom. Our prejudices disappear and we are trained by long and careful apprenticeship to the scientific and historical tone and temper which are of the very essence of all true criticism. The objective historic method is the note of the new Textual Criticism, as dogmatic caprice was too often the note of the old. Where the truth lies cannot be doubted. But while these studies are full of caution, they also

reassure. Ignorance magnifies the extent of uncertainty and its effect upon the faith. Criticism reduces it to its true proportions. And when this is done it is seen how slender is the cause for panic. What looms before the uncritical as a vague and shadowy spectre of unknown power for evil, stands, in the clear light of knowledge, defined with the sharpest precision, impotent to harm. It is only a timid faith that can be disturbed by the knowledge of the truth, or scandalised by proved errors in the text. Details may be inaccurate, but the main truth stands clear ; the inspiration is not in verbal niceties, but in the full and radiant revelation of God in the minds of those who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEGITIMACY AND NECESSITY OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

I MAY now pass on to the critical treatment of Scripture in the more commonly understood sense. The distinguishing characteristic of modern literary and historical investigation is its critical character. Criticism itself is not a recently-discovered method. It was practised in the early Church, and again at the revival of learning and in the Reformation period and subsequently. But in its keenness and thoroughness, in its minute and exhaustive collection of facts and phenomena, in its careful scientific method, in the strictness with which it applies its tests, criticism became in the nineteenth century practically a new thing. It is characterized by a courage, a penetration, a breadth and a minuteness previously undreamed of. It is used to settle problems of secular literature and history, and it is well that its principles should be learnt in their application to these rather than to sacred books or events, since we are not disturbed by any uneasiness lest our results should undermine beliefs vital to our spiritual life. For example, it would be well for the critical faculty to be trained in some such line of study as the literary analysis of the Homeric poems. Our own religious experience and theological belief are not bound up in any way with the authorship or structure of the Homeric literature. It will make no difference to us whether we

believe that the Iliad and the Odyssey were the work of a single writer, or whether one great poet wrote the Iliad and another the Odyssey, or whether both poems are of long and gradual growth, the outcome of a literary process which may have extended over centuries. We can therefore approach a problem of this kind and concentrate our attention upon the literary question itself, undeterred by any fear lest our investigation should lead us into perplexity concerning our faith. It would, of course, take us far beyond our limits to illustrate critical method by detailed reference to the Homeric or any other problem of the kind, but it is desirable to remind ourselves at the outset that critical method is not something which has been invented to discredit the Bible, but it is the universally accepted mode of inquiry applied to literary or historical problems. But a few words on criticism in general will be desirable before I pass on to the special question of Biblical criticism.

Modern Scholarship, as it stands face to face with a piece of literature, cannot be satisfied till it has submitted the tradition about it to a searching examination. If tradition assigns a poem to a man living at a certain time and in a certain place, it tests that tradition in the most rigid way. It follows it back to its origin, so far as that can be ascertained. It attaches far less weight to its antiquity than to its nearness or distance in origin to or from the date to which the poem is assigned. An unbroken tradition stretching back two thousand years may seem very impressive. But if it professes to attest an event happening two thousand five hundred years ago, the gap of five hundred years reduces its value to very little. In that period, especially if it be an uncritical one, legend has ample time to grow and false conjecture

to arise, so that evidence which cannot be brought nearer to the event than five hundred years is for the critic little better in many cases than no evidence at all. The first links are all-important ; if they are missing, the unbroken chain of later links counts for little or nothing. But the nearness of the tradition to the event of which it speaks is not all. The character of the witnesses must be taken into account ; and this includes their opportunities for knowledge, the soundness of their judgment, their fidelity as transmitters of what they had received. Further, the scholar must try, if possible, to feel his way back from the tradition in its earliest existing form to still earlier forms. In this he may be much helped by the preservation of different traditions. By careful comparison of these it may be possible to work back to the point from which their divergences sprang. He must also investigate the credibility of the tradition as well as its history. By the side of this external evidence of tradition must be set the internal evidence derived from study of the poem itself. Here it would be necessary to search for allusions which might help to fix its date, the country in which it was composed, the social life and political conditions reflected in it, its place in the development of thought and poetical form. But another question would demand attention, whether the poem was the work of one or more authors. If the latter were found to be the case, the next step would be to analyse it into its constituent elements, and ascertain in what order of time they should be placed and to what period they should be assigned. When external and internal evidence have been carefully studied, the results reached along the two lines of investigation should be compared.

The modern historian finds critical method similarly

indispensable. Few would be so uncritical as to relate whatever they found in their authorities, without any regard to its probability. But the critical method attaches much importance to a criticism of authorities. A historian must not only bring his critical faculty to bear on the narrative of his authorities, he must examine the value of the authorities themselves. The documents in which the story is conveyed must be submitted to a searching scrutiny. He must interrogate the witnesses and discover the relations in which they stand to each other. He must ask what were their motives in writing, what audience they had in view, what impressions they wished to create, through what channels they derived their knowledge. He must fix as far as possible the date and chronological order of the documents and inquire what sources, written or oral, lay behind them. He will attach far more weight to the story of an author whom he has found trustworthy and judicious than to that of one who has proved credulous and inaccurate. Contemporary evidence will naturally receive the greatest consideration. It will be clear that alike in literature and history the function of criticism is essentially constructive. If it pulls down it is that it may build better, if it proves all things it is that it may confidently hold fast what is good. If its construction is to be stable and enduring it must rigidly test the materials with which it builds. Its single aim is to discover the truth.

As applied to the Bible, criticism investigates the questions of the date, authorship, and structure of the various books, and seeks to ascertain the sources from which they have been compiled. It refuses to be fettered in its work by any traditional views. If inquiry is not to be worthless, it must be free. No investigation can merit confidence if it carefully works

towards a goal fixed at the outset. It must follow the line suggested by the facts which it brings to light. This position is assailed by two sets of antagonists. We have, in the first place, those who treat Biblical criticism as something illegitimate in itself. These questions, they say, have been settled for us, we may not reopen them, but must accept what we have been taught, without inquiry whether it be true or false. Such an objection cannot be logically urged by a Protestant, inasmuch as it brings in an anti-Protestant principle of authority. But it is also irrational, for by precisely the same argument it could be shown that the heathen should never have embraced Christianity, and that the Reformation should never have taken place. What cannot commend itself to the reason cannot be permanent in our faith, and what will not bear the light of searching inquiry is doomed to pass away. It is the glory of Christianity that it appeals to the reason, and Christians should be the last to deprecate free inquiry into the documents in which their faith finds its authoritative expression. We need to put up no warning notice-board that trespassers will be prosecuted. We have so firm a confidence in the triumph of truth that we welcome the freest and most searching investigation. No gold is of any value to us if it will not stand the severest acid test. And this is pretty universally acknowledged both by those who accept and by those who reject traditional views. Most are agreed that it is a legitimate inquiry to ask at what date a document was written ; who was its author ? is it the work of one hand or of several ? at what date was it compiled ? and to what dates should the various elements in it be assigned ? what were the motives that led the writers to do their work ? from what standpoint did they regard the story they told ? how far

have the selection and grouping of material and the proportions they observe been controlled by the aim that they set before them? Have we the text of the work in one or many manuscripts? if in one only, how far may we believe that it correctly represents the original? if in more than one, how far do they agree, and when they vary, which text is to be preferred? These are the questions with which criticism has to deal, and the Bible can as little escape them as any other historical literature. It is a complete mistake to suppose that criticism, as applied to Scripture, is necessarily animated by any hostility, either to religion or to the Bible. In many cases it is precisely the opposite feeling, the sense of its unique value and importance, that drives us forward to undertake irksome and minute investigation, which we should regard as too laborious for any other literature.

But there are many who while they admit that Biblical criticism is legitimate in itself, yet regard certain methods or conclusions as incompatible with fundamental Christian truth. The discussion of this position may start with the assertion of a general principle. This is, that once we have admitted the right of scientific scholarship to deal with the literary and historial problems of the Bible we cannot limit its scope. We must permit it to work by its own methods, and reach its own results, without external dictation as to what these results should be. It is only after they have been reached that the question can properly arise, How may they be adjusted to conclusions reached in other realms of thought? It is impossible to be asking all the while, Is this or the other result 'safe'? If we trust our method at all, we must trust it altogether.

I must briefly examine, however, the objection that the presuppositions or the results which have in many

cases been reached by critics are such that we cannot in loyalty to fundamental truth accept them. There is no charge more frequently or with more assurance brought against the criticism with which we are dealing, than that it starts from a disbelief in the supernatural, and is throughout controlled by it. The results to which it comes are determined, it is said, by the theory that there can be in religion no supernatural revelation, but only natural evolution. Miracle and predictive prophecy are alike excluded by it. If critical results really involved these premisses, it would be a serious matter for Christians. For Christianity rests on historical facts, from which the element of the supernatural cannot be excluded. In our reply to this charge there are several things that must be taken into account. It is perfectly true that many of the most distinguished critics have not been believers in the supernatural. Kuenen is a conspicuous example of this, all the more so, that his work is often marred by the obtrusion of his antipathy to the supernaturalism of the Bible. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that there is reason for this element in critical works. Orthodox Christians for a long time refused to have anything to do with a criticism which did not lead to the accepted results. Theologians were so pledged to the old way of looking at things that any doubt as to the traditional authorship of the Pentateuch or any reflection on its historical character was regarded by them as blasphemy; so little were they able to distinguish between an accident and an essential of the Christian faith. So the work was left to those who had no sympathy with some of the fundamental views of evangelical Christianity. If the Churches had from the first taken their share in the work of criticism, and refused to leave it to 'the Left,' this charge could never have been brought. But

unhappily the Churches stood aloof, and a great deal of the work was done by rationalistic critics. Much of the criticism is not essentially the worse for this, for the simple reason that the question of the supernatural emerges very much less in the investigation of the Old Testament than the remarks of opponents would lead people to suppose ; in the crucial problems it does not emerge at all. And while I think it highly important that criticism should be largely in the hands of believing critics, there is little ground for supposing that a belief in the supernatural would have seriously modified the results.

But is it true that antisupernaturalism is so woven into the texture of this criticism that we must believe that those who accept it and remain believers in a supernatural revelation are unconsciously inconsistent ? That is really a vital question for us, for such an inconsistency will sooner or later be revealed, as logic accomplishes its task. We ought to make sure before we commit ourselves to a critical position, that it will not carry with it an implicit surrender of the fundamental truths of our religion. I am not pleading here that a critic should be hampered in his search for truth by any fear of consequences ; fearlessness and honesty are the very breath of life to criticism. But no principle should be assumed in the investigation such as the impossibility of the miraculous, because such an assumption is unscientific. With presuppositions of this kind criticism has nothing to do. Criticism is literary and historical. So far as it is controlled by such a postulate it has ceased to be criticism. And this is recognized by critics themselves.

It may be best to quote two passages from representatives of different theological schools, each of whom is universally recognized as an authoritative exponent of

modern criticism. Kuenen says: 'Without for a moment concealing my own conviction that there is not one single miracle on record which we can accept as a fact, I would, nevertheless, place in the forefront of historical criticism the principle that *miracles are possible*. To this principle I have never been consciously untrue while pursuing the very path which has led me to the conviction I have just avowed.' (Article on 'Critical Method' in the *Modern Review*, 1880, page 485.) Robertson Smith says: 'If in the application you find me calling in a rationalistic principle, if you can show at any step in my argument that I assume the impossiblity of the supernatural or reject plain facts in the interests of rationalistic theories, I will frankly confess that I am in the wrong.' (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd edition, page 19.)

In spite of these disclaimers we are assured that the very origin of the critical hypothesis justifies an attitude of suspicion towards it. It was born and cradled in rationalism and this original taint inheres to this day in its very essence. The modern theory has largely been built up, Dr. Orr tells us, on 'the rationalistic conviction that a supernatural explanation of facts cannot be admitted.' It is quite true that he admits that there are moderate and devout men, who tone down the negations and breathe into criticism a more believing spirit, but he tells us that we are not to take our views of the Grafian criticism from these writers. They are not its true representatives; we must go to the rationalists; they are the only authorized spokesmen from whom we can learn what the critical movement really means. I think that we must carefully distinguish criticism from the history of religion. When I defend the Grafian position, I am defending the common view as to the analysis of the Pentateuch and the

order of the documents according to which Deuteronomy forms the middle term between J E and P, the latter document being placed after Ezekiel. If a man accepts these views, whatever theological position he may hold, whether he believes in miracles or rejects them, whether he is a conservative in New Testament criticism or a radical, whether he is evangelical or rationalistic, he is a Grafian ; and my own grounds for believing in the truth of the Grafian position are wholly independent of any rationalistic pre-suppositions whatever. My belief in it is not determined by any *a priori* evolutionary theory, nor do I rest at all on the argument from silence. The theory seems to me to be required by the phenomena in the Old Testament itself. Accordingly I refuse to institute an Index Expurgatorius, and to say that there are no authoritative exponents of the true inwardness of the Grafian theory outside the ranks of the rationalists. If the meaning of criticism is illegitimately stretched to embrace the history of religion that is a different matter, but such an extension is unwarrantable. In the New Testament no doubt antipathy to miracle counts for a great deal more. But in the main problems of Old Testament criticism, whether they touch the analysis or the dating of the documents, this antipathy is little, if at all, discernible. Not philosophical postulates but hard facts in the documents themselves form the ground on which the critical conclusions rest. I may quote as a parallel case the higher criticism of the Homeric poems. The supernatural is present in those poems in full measure. But the literary analysis of them into their constituent parts is made with no intention of eliminating the supernatural. The champions of the unity of the poems are at one with impugners of it in disbelieving the supernatural stories that are told. It is the phenomena

presented by the writings themselves which have led to the denial of the unity of authorship. And it is the same with the Old Testament Books. It is not the supernatural element in the Pentateuch that has forced critics to a denial of the Mosaic authorship. It has been the difficulty felt in ascribing to one writer the widely different styles, the inconsistent codes of legislation, the remarkable divergence in points of view, and all the other features which indicate plurality of authors. It is quite true that people who start from the naturalistic standpoint may find that the critical conclusions fit very well into their scheme of the universe, and they are of course less exposed to some of the antecedent difficulties which are felt by the devout Christian. But it is only a confusion of issues to argue that they alone have the right to tell us what the critical movement means. If from two different starting-points the same conclusion on a certain matter is reached, we have no justification for the assertion that only one line of approach may be legitimately followed.

Others, again, distrust the results because they have been reached by experts, and experts, though their evidence is very valuable in its place, generally push their views too far. It is the jury, we are reminded, who give the verdict, the specialists are too liable to be one-sided. The practical inference often drawn from this is that it is for the ordinary man to decide these questions. It must be remembered, however, that the juryman is not the man in the street with an off-hand judgment, but the man in the jury-box, who has patiently followed the evidence and the searching cross-examination of witnesses, who has carefully weighed the facts on both sides, who has listened to the expert comment of the counsel and the summing up of the judge, who has watched the de-

meanour of the witnesses and the parties to the case, and thus has gained the competence and the right to form an opinion, and gives it in accordance with the facts and the evidence, not in accordance with any prejudices with which he entered on his task. And criticism has no cause to shrink from a similar judgment, by a non-expert audience, if the audience is free from prejudice, has carefully followed the evidence, and taken due account of the arguments of experts. But on matters of such difficulty, complexity, and unfamiliarity uninstructed common sense has no right to pronounce at all. A man may have the common sense of Benjamin Franklin himself, but unless he has familiarized himself with the problems, he has no right to say a word on either side. The practice of giving a verdict when one has never been in court at all cannot be too strongly condemned.

One of the most serious difficulties in the way of acceptance of critical results is caused by the definite ascription of certain things to particular authors, which modern investigation has seen reason to date at another period. The most noteworthy example is the formula, 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,' which is constantly prefixed to laws that we have reason to believe are later than his time. There are several suggestions which may tend to remove this difficulty. Law has its own peculiar methods, and in ancient systems especially certain forms are required to confer validity on laws. It may be suggested that this formula was considered to give legal validity to a law. The question may arise whether such a formula could have been used unless it was strictly true. In reply to this it may be pointed out that what are known as 'legal fictions' have been common in legal systems, in none more so than in English law.

In a developing society it is inevitable that new conditions should continually arise. It is, therefore, obvious that a legislation which is suitable to an early and simple stage of society becomes speedily inadequate as society grows more complex. It lies in the nature of the case that if justice is to be upheld and right is to be done, law must keep pace with the movement of society, or at any rate not lag too far behind it. Now this necessity might be satisfied by the constant creation of new laws, but the incessant interference with legal machinery which this would involve renders such a method rather unsuitable to society at that point of development. Accordingly another method is constantly followed. Instead of creating new laws the old laws are stretched to cover the new requirements. This has to be done by a legal fiction in order that a plaintiff may bring his case before the court. In such instances he is obliged to put his suit in order by feigning to be in a position which is recognized by the existing law. There is in all this no deception, but an extension of the old legislation to cover a situation which was not originally contemplated. Now, in the case before us we have a much slighter fiction through which the new legislation is made valid by the old formula. And its justification lies in this, that Moses was the original legislator, and these regulations were regarded as deductions from his laws, implicitly contained in them, but made explicit only in a later age, when new conditions had arisen, and new laws had to be made. Further, we have a significant hint in the Bible itself that this formula must not be pressed. According to later Jewish theology, it was believed that the Law was given by angels. What is important for us is that this belief is endorsed in the New Testament. It occurs in the speech of Stephen

(Acts vii. 53, cf. 38), in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 2), in the Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 19), while it underlies much of the argument of the Epistle to the Colossians. If, then, it was legitimate for New Testament writers to interpret so freely the words 'and God spake,' it can hardly be wrong for the critic to refuse to be tied down to a literal interpretation of the words, 'unto Moses.' This principle largely covers the addresses attributed to Moses in Deuteronomy. It may be added, however, with reference to these, that the Hebrew language had no reporting style, and therefore, if an address was to be reported, it had to be written in the first person. But it would be absurd to argue that a report in the first person must be verbatim, if the language had no means of reporting in any other way.

Another charge often urged against Biblical criticism is that the results if true destroy the inspiration of the Bible. What they really destroy is certain unauthorized, even though widely-held, human theories of inspiration. But in any case the objection is illegitimate. We must derive our theory of inspiration from the phenomena of Scripture, not study the phenomena in the light of theories which have been formulated with no reference to embarrassing facts. The reverent student will shrink from imposing his abstract speculations on the very complex mass of facts to which any adequate and scientific explanation must be adjusted. Moreover, it is foolish to frame hard and fast theories which have no practical religious value but which strain faith to the snapping point. Such a theory is that of the infallibility or the inerrancy of Scripture. The ordinary Christian can read the Bible only in a translation, at the best very imperfect. Even the best equipped scholar is confronted with

frequent uncertainties as to the true text of Scripture, and with innumerable difficulties as to its meaning. If any real value attached to the infallibility of the original record we should have expected an absolutely correct transmission of the text, and a freedom from all obscurity in the sense. What God thought it worth while to give He might be expected to preserve. Yet even the defenders of verbal inspiration are usually driven to admit that our present text cannot be everywhere defended. They fall back on the original autographs, and assert that if these could be discovered they would be found to be absolutely free from error of any kind. But the dogma of the infallibility of the autographs is a device to get rid of inconvenient facts, without one shred of evidence in its favour, and with the evidence of textual criticism strongly against it (see pp. 397 f.). Besides, we have to deal with the text as it has come down to us, not with some quite different documents, which God supernaturally kept free from error for the handful of original readers, but abandoned to inaccurate transmission in the copies read by the whole Church of subsequent ages. We need not be more concerned about the infallibility of Scripture than God has been. And the infallibility of an infallible document is of little use to the majority of Christians without an infallible translation and interpretation. Nevertheless, the ordinary Christian derives constant spiritual profit from his imperfectly transmitted, imperfectly translated, and imperfectly understood Bible. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is dangerous, because it conflicts with so much in the Bible; and to stake the truth of Christianity upon it is disastrous in the extreme. The duty of a student of Scripture is to examine the Bible itself, patiently collect the facts that bear upon the subject, and then try to

formulate a theory which shall do justice to all the facts, and not by a hasty generalization or acceptance of a traditional theory blind his eyes to phenomena that would otherwise be obvious to him. We may therefore dismiss as illegitimate this objection, that criticism is to be rejected because it is inconsistent with the inspiration of the Bible.

No doubt what weighs most with many Christians is the supposed testimony given by Christ to the authorship of Old Testament books. An appeal to the authority of Christ must be received with the greatest reverence, but it becomes us here specially to be sure of our ground lest we profanely use His name to endorse our own views. In the first place it should be noticed that Christ's references to authorship are few and usually very general. If pressed to their fullest extent they would not attest anything like the whole traditional view. It is not probable, however, that Christ's references involved a pronouncement on authorship. He naturally used the language of His own time, not raising side-issues away from His message, nor casting needless stumbling-blocks in men's way. Even the explicit reference to David as the author of Psalm cx. is really no more than the acceptance for controversial purposes of a position held by His antagonists in order to refute them from their own point of view. The case is parallel with His challenge to the Pharisees : 'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out ?' Many who hold that the one passage commits us to the belief in the Davidic authorship of Psalm cx., would shrink from applying the same principle in the other passage, and insisting that we must believe that the disciples of the Pharisees actually cast out devils.

But the further question may be raised whether in

these matters the knowledge of Christ was greater than that of His time. Our surest source of information, as I have said before, is the Gospel narrative. Not only does this preserve for us an actual assertion by Christ of His ignorance as to the time of His coming, but it is abundantly clear that in many matters His knowledge was limited, unless we dishonour Him by accusing Him of unreality. Where He enters the region of moral and spiritual truth, His teaching is final. But in such matters as the authorship of books, to which no vital importance attaches, we may believe that His words do not and were never intended to bar the fullest investigation. And this brings us in face of the problem of the Incarnation. Here I revert to a question I discussed at some length in my volume, *Christianity: Its Nature and its Truth*; but the importance of the subject must be my apology for dealing briefly with it. The essential conditions of a true solution are a full recognition of the Deity of Christ coupled with as full a recognition of His humanity. Such a union of the human and Divine must in the nature of things be full of mystery to us, who only imperfectly know what humanity is and still less what is the essence of the Divine. Yet we can see to some extent what it would involve. It could not take place without some surrender on the Divine side. We must hold fast at all costs the reality of Christ's experience, which, as we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, qualified Him to be our High-priest. It was therefore necessary for Him to surrender everything that was incompatible with a truly human life. And this is especially true in the sphere of knowledge. He had to grow in wisdom as He grew in stature (Luke ii. 52). He had to become like His brethren in all points except sin. He had to undergo the same tempta-

tions. This condition of the Incarnation involved a limitation in His knowledge. There are some temptations, and those among the most difficult to resist, which would be impossible to omniscience. They derive all their power from the imperfection of knowledge in those to whom they are addressed. Knowledge is a counter-spell which breaks at once the fascination they would cast over them. Such knowledge had therefore to be withheld from Christ that He might experience the temptations by which His brethren are racked. Since then we have no right to claim omniscience for Jesus during His earthly life, we need feel no obligation to foreclose by an appeal to His authority questions of literary or historical criticism.

I am glad to say, however, that the authority of our Lord is now much less confidently thrown into the anti-critical scale. The more cautious defenders of tradition are beginning to realize how imprudent it is to gamble with such high stakes. Speaking now, not as a critic, but simply as a theologian, I regard the appeal to the authority of Christ to foreclose the discussion of critical questions as very dangerous to a sound Christology. Accepting the Divinity of our Lord in the strictest sense of the term, I am not disposed to treat an appeal to the authority of Christ as demanding from us anything but the most reverent attention. But I am all the more concerned that it should not be invoked, as it is by the more reckless spirits in the traditional camp, in a cause that would not command His approval. It is true that in the very learned works recently published on Daniel by Dr. C. H. H. Wright, the stress is largely laid on the authority of Christ, though even he has to make a very significant concession to the critics with reference to the

Maccabean date of some of the later chapters in their present form. But Dr. Orr, whose strength lies especially in Systematic Theology, makes very little reference indeed to this side of the question, confessing that Christ accepted current views of authorship which it was no part of His mission to pronounce upon, and never thought in His reference to Moses, David and Isaiah of giving an authoritative judgment on the history or mode of origin of these books. Dr. Orr, it is true, thinks that Christ would have pronounced a very emphatic judgment on some of the modern theories of Scripture, had they been brought before Him. It is unfortunate that he does not specify what theories he has in mind, or possibly he might have found many believing critics to agree with him. But anyhow this is only his pious opinion, with which in the absence of any evidence it is unnecessary to concern ourselves.

But now I advance a step farther. The very nature of the Bible makes criticism not only legitimate but imperative. This will be best appreciated if we ask ourselves what kind of a book we should have expected the Bible to be, supposing that we had no knowledge of the Bible we actually possess. We should naturally have expected in the first place that it would be a compendium of religious truth. It should expound the nature of God and of man, the relations between them, the rectification of the abnormal tendencies in human nature and similar topics in a clear and orderly manner; in other words, it should present us with a system of doctrine. Further, it would naturally be consulted for a perfect system of conduct; in other words, it should be a treatise on morality. We might, perhaps, further expect it not only to direct our thought concerning Divine things and

control our conduct, but to stimulate the religious emotion. But it is quite clear that such a book would be very different from the Bible we actually possess. For the Bible is neither a treatise on Systematic Theology, nor a handbook on Ethics, nor yet a manual of devotion. It is true that it contains more teaching on Theology than any system of dogmatics has been able to incorporate, and a mass of moral teaching that no moralist has exhausted. For devotional reading it is unrivalled in its power to lift the soul into immediate and unhindered fellowship with God. Yet it possesses all these great qualities in virtue of the fact that primarily it is something else.

If we examine it, apart from any theory, we are struck at the outset by the large proportion of history or narrative, in much of which religion seems to hold a subordinate place. Often it is the development of external events, wars, alliances, rebellions, and other concerns of the statesman. Sometimes it is a series of anecdotes which would not suggest a spiritual significance to us if we met them in other literature. The historians are invaluable in that they exhibit to us the course of Israel's political fortunes, they give us a firm skeleton of fact, but for the flesh and blood and breath of life we have to turn mainly to prophet and poet. The prophets are not engrossed with the far-away past or the distant future, but stand face to face with their contemporaries, dealing closely with their actual life, testing their diplomacy and administration of justice by their exalted social and political ideals, seeking to rectify their relation to God and conduct to their fellow-men. Again in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament we have the problems of life discussed, as in Job, or its duties enforced, as in Proverbs. In the Psalms we have the expression

of religious experience, often of marvellous depth and range. There is much that is parallel in the New Testament. Here also we have narrative books, describing the life, the teaching, the death, the resurrection of Jesus, and the growth of the early Church. But we also have the Epistles, in which we may see the counterpart to the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. They deal with the urgent present and its problems; even where speculation takes its boldest flight it is that some commonplace duty may be enforced, some problem of conduct grow clear under an intenser light. Now all this means that revelation is a process in history. It is exquisitely fitted to the concrete reality; is no body of abstract propositions, but everywhere intimately associated with life. Its lack of system may perplex us when we first observe it, but when we come to reflect on it, we realize how natural it is for a literature which is a transcript of life to be so incidental.

But, if revelation is mediated through history, we must understand the history in order that we may know the revelation. To gain the greatest good from the Bible we must place ourselves in line with the main stream of it. If we open the writings of a prophet we read words addressed to his own time with its special conditions and peculiar needs. The value of the message, when originally uttered, depended largely on its close applicability to the circumstances with which it dealt. Hence there is often a local and temporal element in Scripture, which must be allowed for if we are to appropriate its permanent message. We must go behind the special application and reach the universal principles applied if we are to reapply those principles to our own wholly different conditions. But we cannot do this without knowing the con-

ditions to which the application is made. It is not too much to say that, for want of this historical study, a large part of the Old Testament and some things in the New have been a sealed book to most readers of the Bible. It is true that much in the Bible is not of special application, but is the utterance of the universal and the eternal. But while such passages speak immediately to the heart and are independent of circumstances of time or place, much is lost through failure to understand the historical conditions in which the word first came to the men who heard it. Since the fortunes of Israel changed much from time to time, a book may have quite a different light cast upon it according as its composition is placed in one period or another. Thus questions of date and authorship are of importance for the true interpretation. So also is the determination of the structure of individual books. It will clearly make a great difference to the interpretation of a book if the whole of it is judged to belong to a single period and to one author, or if pieces of different periods and by different authors have been incorporated in it. There is another matter of importance. Christians see in the Religion of Israel a Divinely-ordered preparation for Christianity. But if we have in the Old Testament a progressive revelation leading up to Christ, we need to place its documents in the true order if we are to understand the course which the development took.

But if the Bible is to be studied historically, criticism is indispensable. The history is enshrined in documents, and these documents must be dated and analysed that we may fit each into its proper place in the onward march of God's self-revelation. It is criticism alone that can answer questions as to time and place, circumstances of origin or the composite

authorship of the documents. No modern historian would write a history until he had examined by the best methods of scientific criticism the documents from which his narrative was drawn, and there is no reason why sacred history should be deprived of the great advantage derived from critical examination of the sources. It has pleased God to give us the Bible in such a form as to make criticism of it essential if we are truly to understand it in all its fulness and depth of meaning. It is a perpetual challenge to all the qualities of mind and heart, rewarding those most richly who lavish the most loving study upon it, and count no tedious toil too arduous that they may more truly understand by what way God has given it to us.

It must, of course, be clearly understood that what I have said so far, has been designed to justify a method rather than to commend for acceptance any set of results. I have wished to vindicate the right of criticism to carry through its investigations by its own methods, and to reach its results in its own way. I have, at the same time, had in mind the fact that criticism is a special science, and that we must look forward, at the end of its investigations, to a final decision on the nature of Scripture which shall take into account the results reached by other methods of inquiry. The case is the same here as in other special sciences. The philosopher desires to reach a unified conception of the universe. In that scheme of things as he ultimately reconstructs it he must find room for the results of the special sciences. He does not insist that the chemist or the biologist, the historian or the anthropologist, the physiologist or the psychologist should conduct their researches under his control. They have not to look at their facts through the

spectacles of philosophic theory. But while he recognizes the independence of the special sciences he cannot admit their finality. Not one of them is entitled to set itself up as a philosophy and to interpret the universe in its special dialect. The philosopher has to co-ordinate the results which each of these sciences offers him, to adjust their contributions to each other, and weave the various strands of knowledge into a harmonious pattern which shall copy the total reality. And similarly he who seeks to understand the Bible must recognize that the contribution made by criticism is not the last word upon Scripture. Room must be made for it in the full-orbed theory of the Bible which it is our aim to secure, but it is not competent to give us our ultimate conception of it. There are many factors beside the critical factor which must be taken into account by all who would seek to form a theory of Scripture which shall be in harmony, not with human fancies or with ecclesiastical tradition, but with the Divine fact. But we must not for that reason invert the true order of things and impose the shackles of a preconceived theory on the freedom of critical research.

It is my ultimate aim to vindicate for the Bible an even higher, because truer, place in the affectionate regard of Christians than that which has often been unintelligently accorded it. To do this successfully involves preliminary discussions with which some readers may be tempted to grow impatient ; still more it may seem to those who have not learnt to distinguish between essence and accident, between substance and form, as if I were trying to sap the foundations of belief. But I would appeal to those who are disturbed by the facts I have to bring before them to be patient till the whole case has been presented, and

to remember those who have to struggle with intellectual difficulties to which they themselves are strangers and whom it is our duty, if possible, to reclaim for faith.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM

It will probably assist us in forming an estimate of the results reached by criticism if we look back over the long history which has brought it to its present position. I said in an earlier chapter that criticism is by no means a purely modern invention. If, for example, we think of secular literature, we have the Alexandrian critics who denied that the Iliad and the Odyssey were the work of a single author. We find an admirable discussion of the differences between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel from the pen of Dionysius, who was Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 247–265, which might have been written by a modern Biblical critic. From the period of the Renaissance we may recall the demonstration that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery. Luther and the other Reformers occasionally expressed acute and penetrating judgments on some of the Biblical books. I need only mention Luther's brilliant suggestion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by Apollos. At a later period Hobbes, Spinoza, Simon, and others had pointed out several phenomena in the Pentateuch which negatived the idea of its Mosaic authorship. These, however, were somewhat desultory observations, and the clue to a scientific treatment of the Pentateuch was first discovered by Jean Astruc. He was a Roman Catholic physician, and published anony-

mously in 1753 a book which was of epoch-making importance. He started from the observation that in some narratives in Genesis the Divine name used was Yahweh, and in other sections it was Elohim. The former of these names is familiar to us in its modern form Jehovah, a barbarous invention only a few centuries old. It is usually translated LORD. The latter name, Elohim, means God. Astruc's criticism was of a very conservative type. He did not dispute the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. His book, in fact, bore the title: *Conjectures on the Original Memoirs which it Appears that Moses Employed to Compose the Book of Genesis*. Curiously, he thought that Moses had also employed documents for the first two chapters of Exodus. But conservative though he was, his significance was immense, since he was the first to set criticism in the way of analysing the Pentateuch into its constituent elements. In 1783 J. G. Eichhorn published his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, the first great critical work on this subject. He also attributed the Pentateuch to Moses, but as a result of independent investigation adopted views as to documentary analysis similar to those of Astruc. His book exerted great influence on German opinion.

If a Roman Catholic layman had been the first to point out a clue to the analysis it is a Roman Catholic priest whom I have next to mention. This was A. Geddes, a very learned scholar, whose chief books were written in the closing decade of the eighteenth century. In one respect his work may appear reactionary, since he discarded the clue to analysis which had been placed in the hands of scholars by Astruc and Eichhorn. Nevertheless he accepted the theory that the Pentateuch had been put together from earlier writings and oral tradition. Among these earlier writings he

included the journals of Moses. His improvement on earlier critics consisted mainly in his recognition that the Pentateuch could not be the work of Moses, although he did not deny a large Mosaic element in it. He thought that it might be assigned to the reign of Solomon, but that it was not earlier than David or later than Hezekiah. In another respect Geddes was a pioneer. Most readers will be familiar with the fact that modern scholars often speak of the Hexateuch rather than the Pentateuch. They do so to express the fact that the documents, which may be traced through the Pentateuch, are continued in the Book of Joshua. Geddes, to a certain extent, anticipated this by his view that Joshua was written by the authors of the Pentateuch. A German scholar, J. S. Vater, took up Geddes's results in a *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, which he wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century (A.D. 1802–1805). With remarkable acuteness he detected a great number of disconnected fragments in the Pentateuch, but he failed in the power of combination, or he might have succeeded in discovering that many of his fragments were really parts of one and the same document.

So far, then, we have two streams of criticism, one recognizing the use of Divine names as a clue to the analysis of Genesis, but maintaining the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the other rejecting this clue, though admitting a documentary analysis, but denying the Mosaic authorship. The next writer whom I have to mention had points of contact with both. This was B. D. Ilgen, who published, in 1798, the first part of a work which he never completed, discussing the composition of Genesis. This marked a noteworthy advance in several respects. While his affinity with Geddes and Vater was revealed in the fact that his

also was a ' fragment hypothesis ' in the sense that he regarded Genesis as composed of seventeen originally distinct documents, he displayed a surer constructive ability in the recognition that these need not be assigned to more than three writers. Moreover, while he gave one hand to Geddes, he gave the other to Astruc and Eichhorn, since he granted the validity of the key to the analysis found by them in the use of the Divine names. But here, too, he made an important advance. For just as he improved on the work of the fragmentists, so he improved on that of Astruc and Eichhorn. He recognized that there were two Elohistic writers—that is, that two authors used Elohim as a proper name. In this Ilgen was much before his time, and it was not till fifty years later that this premature observation, which is now practically universally accepted, was rediscovered and established by Hupfeld.

Just after the completion of Vater's Commentary one of the great Biblical scholars of the last century, De Wette, described by Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*, p. 4) as ' the epoch-making pioneer of historical criticism in this field,' published his *Contributions to Old Testament Introduction* (1806–7). He was quite young at the time, but he advanced the science alike by the methods he introduced and the results he reached, though his later publications hardly justified the great expectations aroused by this very brilliant youthful work. He identified the Law-book, on which the Reform of Josiah was based, with Deuteronomy, one of the positions which has stood the test of time, and secured almost universal adhesion. He set the history of religious institutions as described in Judges, Samuel, and Kings alongside of the regulations in the Pentateuchal codes. It is true that the conclusions he

attained by this method have had to be revised in a very important respect, but the method itself has been of the highest value to criticism. He also took a very unfavourable view as to the historical character of the Books of Chronicles. No substantial change in the critical position was made by Ewald, though he was among the greatest of Old Testament scholars in the nineteenth century, and his *Hebrew Grammar*, his *History of Israel*, and his Commentaries enormously advanced Biblical science. A work by Hupfeld, however, on the *Sources of Genesis*, which was published in 1853, completed the work initiated by Astruc exactly a hundred years before. As I have already mentioned he demonstrated the fact that two Elohistic documents had to be recognized. It had already become clear that the documents detected in Genesis ran through the rest of the Pentateuch, so that now, so far as literary criticism was concerned, the analysis into four main documents had been effected. Deuteronomy obviously stood by itself, and in the rest of the Pentateuch there was a document in which the Divine name Yahweh was preferred and two documents which avoided that name and used Elohim. These two Elohistic documents, while they were at one in their preference for Elohim, were in almost every other respect distinct. One of them had marked affinities with the Yahwistic writer. Both are characterized by charm of literary style, by their deep human interest, by narrative skill, by exquisitely truthful portraiture of character. The other Elohistic document, commonly known as the Priestly Document, is noteworthy for its ecclesiastical interests, its precise and formal style, its partiality to stereotyped expression, its lack of human interest.

But, while the labour of a hundred years had achieved

so much, much still remained to be accomplished. For, after the documentary analysis had been effected, the question had to be settled, in what order were the documents written and to what date ought they to be assigned? I do not, of course, mean to suggest that the earlier critics had no views upon this matter. The date of Deuteronomy had been pretty closely determined. The vital question, however, that was at issue touched the date of the Priestly Document. And here the earlier critics for the most part accepted a very early date. This date was favoured by two considerations. In the first place this document forms the framework in which the other documents are inserted, and it seemed the more natural order that the framework should be written first. On the other hand, critics were impressed by the minuteness of detail which appeared to attest its early date.

But this generally-accepted opinion had not commanded unbroken assent. In his lecture-room at Strassburg, Reuss, as early as 1833, communicated to his students a series of theses. The traditional view had placed the chief parts of the Old Testament in the order, Law, Psalms, Prophets. Reuss argued that the true order was Prophets, Law, Psalms, which corresponds roughly to that now generally accepted. So far as the internal criticism of the Pentateuch is concerned, his most important result, anticipating what is commonly called the Grafian Theory, was that the Priestly Laws were later than Deuteronomy. He had not, however, the courage of his convictions, so he failed to put forward his views for the judgment of a wider public. A couple of years later (1835) a very important work was published by Vatke. It was designed to set forth a history of Biblical religion, but only the first part of the Old Testament portion was published.

Although it was masterly alike in its grasp and its method it made little impression at the time. Partly this was due to the uncouth Hegelian terminology in which the writer expounded his views, partly to the unwelcome character of the views themselves. Reuss himself actually had the book in his hands, but was so repelled by the jargon in which the Table of Contents was written that he entirely failed to recognize that his own conclusions had been independently reached by its author. It was only at a much later period that the book came to its own, but a tardy justice was done to the writer when Wellhausen declared that from Vatke he had learnt best and most. The supreme merit of Vatke's work consisted in this : that he realized that the question of the order in which the documents were to be placed must be settled in connexion with the history of religious institutions. A special department of that subject was discussed by another Hegelian, George, in a work on *The Jewish Feasts*, published the same year. Both of these scholars paid the penalty exacted from those who are in advance of their age. Their demonstration that the Priestly Code was later than Deuteronomy was met with ridicule rather than with argument. The dominant school of Old Testament criticism treated such a novel view as a critical heresy, and placed the Priestly Document at the beginning and Deuteronomy at the end of the series of documents now combined in the Pentateuch. No further attempt was made to disturb the current opinion for thirty years, and it continued to be dominant for more than forty years.

The prejudices on which it rested, however, were to some extent undermined by its own supporters. And here we touch the contribution of an English

writer. The name of Colenso is still well known, though nearly half a century has elapsed since he threw British Christianity into convulsions by the publication of the first part of his work, *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined*. This book in its later portions was concerned with literary analysis, but in this domain Colenso's work had no particular importance, and would call for no mention in this brief survey. He acquiesced at the outset in the common belief that the Priestly Document was the earliest. This belief rested largely on the impression of accuracy made by its wealth of minute detail. Colenso's examples of the unhistorical character of the Pentateuch were drawn mainly from this document. But while he thus undermined one of the chief arguments for the common view, he failed to draw the inference that the least accurate document might very well be the latest. The first part of his work was accordingly important, just because he quite unwittingly prepared the way for the now dominant theory. His criticism of the narratives in the Pentateuch was carried through without reference to documentary structure, but, as it happened, his examples were almost entirely drawn from the Priestly Document. The work begun by Colenso was completed by Nöldeke in 1869. This scholar, perhaps the greatest of our living Semitists, sketched in masterly fashion the characteristics of the Priestly Document and defined its limits with greater precision than had been previously attained. But while he exhibited, in an even fuller form than Colenso, the weakness of the argument on which the claim to its early date had been based, he still placed it earlier than Deuteronomy, alleging among other reasons that the post-exilic period was unequal to the production of such a work. One of the most interesting developments in recent

Old Testament criticism has been that in consequence of the recent discovery of Jewish Aramaic papyri Nöldeke has felt himself compelled to accept the post-exilic origin of this document, a step which he had been for some time anticipating that he must take.

I have deserted the chronological order so that I might bring Nöldeke into connexion with Colenso. But three or four years earlier, K. H. Graf, one of Reuss's pupils, had published a very important work on *The Historical Books of the Old Testament* (1865), in which what had been a brilliant divination by the master was established on firm grounds by the pupil. He revived the post-Deuteronomic dating of the Priestly Legislation. At first he made the mistake of separating the Priestly Legislation from the Priestly narrative. Riehm proved that this was inadmissible and argued that since, by Graf's own admission the narrative was early, the legislation must be early. Obviously, however, the argument might be reversed. Kuenen, the famous Dutch critic, who was convinced by Graf's arguments, felt that his division between laws and narratives was the Achilles heel of his theory, and argued, since the legislation is demonstrably late, the narrative must be late. Under the pressure of this criticism Graf wisely revised his view, and put forward the theory that the Priestly Document as a whole, and not simply in its legislative portion, was the latest. In Germany, it is true, the Grafian theory met with no more acceptance than when Vatke and George had expounded it. It was powerfully defended by Kuenen, however, and in 1875 Duhm's work, *The Theology of the Prophets*, removed from Germany the stigma of obstinate inaccessibility to the new critical light. It was Wellhausen, however, who swung Germany into line with the Grafians by the publication in 1878 of his epoch-

making work, *The History of Israel*, vol. i., which, to use Kuenen's happy phrase, was 'the crowning fight in the long campaign.' He had in the two previous years done much for the literary analysis by his brilliant articles on 'The Composition of the Hexateuch.' During the thirty-five years that have elapsed the Grafian theory has steadily made its way. It is, of course, not true that all critics have accepted it, such scholars as Kittel and Baudissin refused to give in their adhesion, and to the last Dillmann was a tower of strength to those who stood by the older critical theory. But the number of dissentients has grown less and less. The vast majority of those who are teachers of the Old Testament by profession accept the analysis of the Pentateuch into four main documents and date the Priestly Document after Deuteronomy and Ezekiel.

I have spoken at length on the story of Pentateuchal criticism, since it will be admitted on all hands that this is by far the most important critical problem which the Old Testament presents. But the analysis which has achieved so much in the Pentateuch has naturally not left the rest of the Old Testament untouched. It has moved forward into the historical books, unravelling the older and later strands of narrative. It has done much to make the prophetic literature more intelligible. This is most conspicuously true in the case of the Book of Isaiah. Here we have learnt to recognize, not only the work of Isaiah of Jerusalem in the eighth century before Christ, but the work of several other, both exilic and post-exilic, writers. New reality has been imparted to what was once an almost unintelligible literature. It is true that both with the prophets and with the poets critical opinion is in much greater flux than with the Pentateuch. Many

things, no doubt, are clear already, but obscure and difficult problems still remain to challenge the critic's keen and eager investigation. Some of these are probably in their very nature insoluble, but others may yield their secret to patient and persistent inquiry. I have still, however, to indicate the reasons which have led the great majority of Old Testament scholars to desert so decisively the traditional view touching the authorship and date of our Old Testament Scriptures.

CHAPTER IX

REASONS FOR THE CRITICAL VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

HAVING sketched the history of Old Testament criticism, specially as it concerns the Pentateuch, it is now my duty to indicate the grounds on which the critical view may be said to rest. So far as the Pentateuch is concerned, I stated that the clue to scientific analysis was discovered by Astruc in the use of the Divine names Yahweh and Elohim. It is necessary to point out, in view of misapprehension on this point, that the analysis of the Pentateuch does not rest exclusively or even mainly on this distinction. This is clear from the fact that critics found themselves forced to recognize that two documents used Elohim as a proper name and from the further fact that this clue largely fails us after the double revelation of Elohim to Moses as Yahweh in the early chapters of Exodus. Many of the phenomena which demonstrate the composite character of the Pentateuch were quite familiar to scholars before Astruc made his famous observation.

We have to distinguish between the different parts of our problem. The critic's first task is to discover whether the document he has before him is a unity, or whether he can detect various strata within it. If he adopts the latter alternative, his next problem is to separate the different strata from each other. Lastly, when he has thus disentangled the elements

in the compilation, he has to inquire into the question of their order and date.

If, then, we take up the Pentateuch with these problems in our mind, our first task is to discover if there is evidence for the use of earlier documents. Such evidence is to be found in differences of style and vocabulary, of representation and point of view, also in repetitions or, as they are technically called, doublets. It is also probable that, where documents have been combined, certain incongruities may arise which are explained by reference to the sources of the compilation. Now along all these lines the Pentateuch is clearly demonstrated to be a highly composite work Of doublets I may refer to the two stories of the Creation which follow a different order in their representation of God's creative activity. The story of the Flood is not single, but composite, and marked by differences of representation. Double explanations are given as to the origin of the names Israel, Bethel, and Beersheba, and different lists of the names of Esau's wives. Two narratives are given of the call of Moses, and the self-revelation of Elohim to him by the new name Yahweh. We find similar evidence of composite structure in later historical books. For example, we have two accounts as to the origin of the proverb, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'

As examples of incongruities which have arisen through the compilation of documents I might refer to some of the chronological discrepancies which have been thus created. I might have included in my list of doublets the stories of Abraham and Isaac's attempts to pass off their wives as their sisters. But, inasmuch as these might be regarded as three distinct events, I refrain from quoting them as illustrations

of duplicate narratives. But it is at least strange that Sarah, who is sixty-five at the time of the former incident, is apparently eighty-nine on the occasion of the latter. There appears to be a difference in the representation of Ishmael's age when he is sent away with Hagar. According to the chronology he was fifteen or sixteen, but other features in the story seem to suggest that he was a child. Similarly Benjamin is represented as a little one, the child of his father's old age. We are accordingly surprised to find him mentioned as the father of ten sons (Gen. xlvi. 21). We need not, perhaps, lay stress on the fact that, though Isaac believes himself to be at the point of death when he bids preparations to be made for the blessing of Esau, he dies, as a matter of fact, about forty-four years later. Yet it must be granted that the chronology of the story which follows is somewhat disconcerting. There are few who can fail to be deeply moved by the exquisite story of Jacob's love for Rachel. But, when we have been enthralled by the romance of it, it is somewhat disenchanting to investigate the chronology. When we do so, we find that to avoid the mistake made by Esau, who had married Hittite wives at the age of forty, Jacob is sent from home when he is seventy-six to marry into the family of Laban. At the time of his marriage he is eighty-three. He remains thirteen years with Laban, and then returns to Canaan, where his family is completed by the birth of Benjamin. It might be urged in reply that in view of the greater longevity attributed to the patriarchs these high figures should not be considered surprising. In reply to this, however, it must be pointed out that such an assumption is conclusively negatived by the story of the miraculous birth of Isaac. An even more striking example

is to be found in the case of the story of the grandsons of Judah and Tamar. Details of this series of incidents cannot be given here; suffice it to say that Judah is represented as becoming a grandfather in considerably less than ten years. It is a great relief to those who are perplexed by such difficulties, to realize that they have simply been created by combination of different documents.

I pass on now to inconsistencies which point to composite authorship. The legislation naturally provides us with the clearest examples. One of the most remarkable is the case of the tithe. According to Num. xviii. 21–24, the whole tithe of Israel is the legal possession of the Levites, who, in their turn, give a tithe of their tithe to the priests. We are very much surprised when we read Deuteronomy to find an entirely different regulation. Every third year the tithe is employed in relief of the poor. As an object of this charity it is true that the Levite is mentioned. But he is mentioned along with the stranger, the widow, and the orphan. In other words, he participates in it as a member of the destitute and defenceless classes. But while in this third year all the tithe of Israel is not given to the Levite, but to him only in common with others who are needy, in the other two years the tithe remains the property of the farmer in his own absolute control. He is to use it for a feast at the central sanctuary. The poor, the Levite, the widow, and the orphan are, it is true, recommended to his bounty, but as a moral rather than a legal obligation. This distinction leads on to a larger distinction. We are not unnaturally puzzled by the description of the Levites as dependent on charity when we are told that they are to have all the tithe of Israel, which was in itself no mean endowment. But this difference

is really characteristic. Deuteronomy consistently represents them as having no inheritance in Israel, but as dwelling in the cities of the other tribes, dependent on the generosity of their neighbours. But elsewhere they have, in addition to the whole tithe, forty-eight cities with a considerable part of the adjoining pasture land. The priestly perquisites from the sacrifices also differ considerably. Deuteronomy assigns the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw, but if we turn to Lev. vi. and vii. we find that the priests have the breast and thigh of the peace offerings, the hide of the burnt offering, and the whole of the sin, guilt, and meal offerings, except those portions which were devoted to God, or, as in the case of the more important sin offerings, were consumed by fire outside the camp because they were too sacred to be eaten even by the priests. Similarly the firstlings, which according to Deuteronomy are to be used for a feast at the sanctuary, are, according to Numbers xviii. 15–19, made over to the priest.

A noteworthy feature in some portions of the Pentateuch is the distinction which is made between the priests and the Levites. The former are described as the descendants of Aaron, and to them alone priestly functions are restricted. The menial service of the tabernacle is entrusted to other members of the tribe of Levi, who are strictly forbidden to usurp the functions of the priest. This distinction is unknown to Deuteronomy, which regards the whole tribe of Levi as consisting of priests. As will appear later, this distinction becomes of the utmost importance when we investigate the question as to the date and order of our documents. Meanwhile it may be noticed as an example of inconsistency in legislation. Other examples touching the law of release of Hebrew

bond-servants or the eating of that which had died of itself might be quoted.

I may linger a moment at this point to lay stress on the value of criticism for apologetics. I shall speak of this in more detail at a later point. But meanwhile it is desirable to emphasize how great is the relief to faith which criticism brings us. The traditional view which considered that these divergent and indeed irreconcilable laws were given by God to Moses within a very brief period of time created a most serious problem for faith. How could we explain the apparent capriciousness of the Divine action and how were we to understand that contradictory laws should be binding on the people? When the critic has made clear to us that these laws belong not only to different documents but that they reflect different periods in the religious development of Israel our difficulty vanishes of itself in view of the principle that changed conditions justify new legislation.

Some of the other arguments I have touched upon already. I have pointed out how we find various documents indicated by marked differences in style and vocabulary. Unfortunately this is a part of the subject which does not lend itself to detailed treatment in a popular work. Especially is this the case with the vocabulary; but it may simply be stated that we find characteristic words aggregated in sections which, on independent grounds, we have reason to suppose, belong to the same document. So far as style is concerned the difference can be felt even in the English translation by any reader who is sensitive to style, if he turns from some of the exquisite stories in Genesis, which we still read with unfailing delight, to some of the dry and formal passages, even of a narrative character and still more of a legislative, which

occur in the middle books of the Pentateuch. One set of passages we find written in a free, glowing style, in which Hebrew prose is seen at its best, a style graphic and picturesque, abounding in vivid description, giving full play to the emotional and human side of its stories. Another set of passages we find to consist of a dry and precise chronicle, formal, colourless, and monotonous, full of constant repetition and set formulæ, the work of a lawyer whose skin has turned into parchment and his blood into scrivener's ink.

Now it might, of course, be urged that difference of style may be accounted for by other causes than difference of personality or documents. The subject matter may vitally affect it—indeed, the style may change with the author's mood. Yet, while this is an abstract possibility, it has the defect that it does not fit the facts. For what we really find is that the changes in vocabulary and in style do not stand by themselves. They are constantly associated with other changes. The strength of the case for analysis lies largely in this fact. It is not an accident that when style and vocabulary change, other changes occur as well. The subjects which engage the author's interest, the standpoint from which the history is regarded, the theological and ecclesiastical system which is presupposed, alter with the alteration in vocabulary and style. The conception of the history that we gain from one is quite different from that which dominates the other; the standards of judgment have altered, and the favourite themes of this group of passages find very little place in that. Now, this does not mean that the different styles are the expression of the same personality; the personality itself changes with the variation of the style. At a pinch we might explain two or three instances on the

traditional view; but it is impossible to argue for it in face of the cumulative evidence without shutting our eyes to the light. Thus, along these lines of varied and mutually independent evidence, we are driven irresistibly to the conclusion that the Pentateuch is not the work of a single writer, but that it embodies different documentary sources. And so much is granted by some of the ablest conservative scholars. Long ago, Dr. James Robertson, in his important though inconclusive work, *The Early Religion of Israel*, admitted the validity of the analysis in words which will bear repetition: 'Too much praise cannot be given to those who have laboured in the field of Pentateuch criticism, for the minute examination they have made of details in the endeavour to sift and distinguish the sources; and as a literary feat, the labour may be pronounced on the whole successful, although it will hardly be asserted that the last word on the subject has yet been spoken (pp. 382 f.). And Dr. Orr has a whole series of passages admitting the validity of the arguments used to prove that P and J E are not from the same hand. I must next endeavour to show along other lines of argument, what is already a certain inference from our present investigation—that Moses cannot be the author of the Pentateuch. I shall then proceed to inquire in what order we should place the documents, and to what dates we ought to assign them.

My first task is to show that Moses cannot have written the Pentateuch. In view of much misrepresentation it may be pointed out at once that this conclusion is not based on the long obsolete view that writing was not invented in Moses' time, but on considerations which are suggested by the Bible itself. The constant reference to Moses in the third person

is, of course, compatible in itself with Mosaic authorship, although for a similar phenomenon we have to leave the field of Hebrew for that of classical literature. Taken in itself it unquestionably suggests that the writer did not wish to represent himself as Moses. In this connexion attention has often been called to the passage in which Moses is praised by the writer as very meek above all men living. Added to this, we have the fact that several geographical indications point to the residence of the writer on the west of Jordan. This is incompatible with Moses' authorship since he died on the eastern side, and was not permitted to cross into the Promised Land.

If indications of place are inconsistent with Mosaic authorship, the same must be said with reference to indications of time. Many of these carry us down long past the time of Moses. The period when the Canaanite was in the land is looked back upon as lying in the past. Abraham pursues his foes as far as Dan, though Laish first received this name in the time of the Judges. Canaan is called by Joseph 'the land of the Hebrews.' The phrase, 'unto this day,' used with reference to incidents or conditions which originated at the close of the wandering, points to a period long subsequent to Moses. We even read 'when the children of Israel were in the wilderness' (Num. xv. 32); and we have a list of the kings of Edom who reigned 'before there reigned any king of the children of Israel.' This carries us at least into the time of Saul. Moreover, the author draws upon documents descriptive of the events of the wilderness period, which it is hardly likely that Moses would use to write the history of his own leadership of the people. It is certainly most improbable that for an event

which happened a few months only before his death he should have employed such a document.

These phenomena are of course notorious, and it may be asked how they are treated by opponents of the critical view. The more sober opponents generally recognize that the traditional opinion cannot be held in all its extent in view of these facts. Accordingly, they substitute for it what they would call a rectified traditional view. In some cases this means a recognition of editorial revision applied to a substantially Mosaic document. Others, again, urge that it is a mistake to emphasize Mosaic authorship, provided that substantial historicity and very early date be affirmed, together with a certain revision at a later period. In both cases, however, it is allowed that the Pentateuch, as it stands, cannot be the work of Moses. No doubt there are those who would hold to the tradition, in spite of all these difficulties, and others which have not been mentioned, though few, it may be imagined, would carry superstition to the point reached by some Rabbis, who affirmed that Moses wrote by anticipation the account of his own death. If we had a well-attested tradition, which guaranteed for us the Mosaic authorship, nothing could be done with these facts, except to ascribe them to later editorial revision. But in the absence of any evidence of Mosaic authorship we must adopt an altogether different line. If we take up a piece of literature which has come to us from antiquity the first thing to do with it is to examine it for evidence as to authorship and date. We regard the date as largely determined by the allusions which it makes to various events or conditions. Unless there is very strong reasons for regarding such allusions as later insertions, it is everywhere taken for granted that

the document can at any rate be no earlier than the incidents which it mentions. If we apply this method to the Pentateuch we must admit that it was compiled long after the time of Moses. We have no right to force the facts into harmony with a preconceived theory for which there are no substantial grounds. If there are non-Mosaic and post-Mosaic elements in the Pentateuch, this must be held in default of grave evidence to the contrary to prove that the Pentateuch is itself non-Mosaic and post-Mosaic.

So far then we have reached two results. One is that the Pentateuch is composed of various documents, the other is that it cannot be the work of Moses, but must be much later than his time. Although I have argued for these two positions on independent grounds, it may be pointed out, before I pass on, that they mutually support each other. If the work is composite it cannot well be Mosaic. There is no reason why Moses should not, as Astruc believed, have composed a record of earlier history on the basis of documents. It is, however, inconceivable that he should have employed documentary sources, written by different authors, to compose a history of his own career and legislation. On the other hand the fact that the Pentateuch was written long after the time of Moses makes it natural to anticipate that the compiler would have woven documents together in its composition. We have several examples both in the Old Testament and in other Oriental literature which show us that this method was one normally adopted by historical writers. What we find then is according to what we should have anticipated.

We have already seen that critics are practically agreed in the view that four main documents can be distinguished in the Pentateuch. I do not, of course,

wish to imply that analysis is at the end of its task when these main documents have been disengaged and their limits have been traced. But for our purpose it is not necessary to pursue the subject into its minuter ramifications and detect strata within the documents or the marks of editorial revision. It will suffice if a general statement be made, roughly indicating the main conclusions which scholars have reached. I begin with Deuteronomy.

The kernel of Deuteronomy consists of a code of laws contained in chapters xii. to xxvi. To this there is prefixed a speech of Moses, exhorting the Hebrews to obey the laws which follow. To that, again, there is prefixed another speech of Moses, containing a brief historical retrospect and closing with an appeal to Israel to obey the statutes and judgments which he was teaching them. Following the code of laws we have other sections largely hortatory in character, but containing also the Song of Moses and his Blessing on the Tribes. The problems presented by the introductory and the concluding chapters are very complex, but they must not detain us. Our fundamental question is that of the date to be assigned to the Code of Laws which forms the nucleus of the book. The demand, which is placed in the forefront of the Deuteronomic Code, is that the worship of Israel is to be concentrated at the sanctuary which God shall choose out of all their tribes. It is only at this one sanctuary that sacrifice may be offered. Local sanctuaries are stringently prohibited. There are several consequential regulations which flow from this primary demand. Thus, in antiquity, slaughter and sacrifice were intimately associated. It appears to have been the rule in Israel for the slaughter of an animal victim to take place at the sanctuary, so that the blood, which

was the vehicle of the life, and therefore too sacred to be eaten, might be devoted to God. But when the local sanctuary was abolished, and one alone was recognized and legitimate, it was obviously impracticable to maintain this regulation. Accordingly, sacrifice and slaughter were disconnected, permission was given for animals to be killed for food anywhere, only the blood had to be poured out on the earth as water. On other consequential changes I need not dwell. One of them, and that among the most important, will meet us later.

To what date, then, are we to assign this document? For a century the view has held its ground that the Law Book found by Hilkiah in the temple during the reign of Josiah is to be identified with Deuteronomy either in whole or in part. This conclusion is based primarily on the fact that a comparison of Deuteronomy with the story of Josiah's Reformation establishes the conclusion that the one supplied the programme for the other. Point by point we can match the story in Kings from the regulations and injunctions in Deuteronomy. At present I am not convinced that we need to descend below the year 621 B.C. for the nucleus of the book. Of course this does not determine the upward limit of date, but this has been fixed to the general satisfaction of critics within fairly narrow limits. The law of the single sanctuary was not recognized as binding till a comparatively late period in Hebrew history. We are constantly told even of good kings that they did not abolish the high places. We find that even good men and prophets freely used the local sanctuaries and offered on altars which from the standpoint of Deuteronomy were illegitimate. We read, it is true, of a reformation in the time of Hezekiah, in which the

local sanctuaries were suppressed; though of course they were revived, and many heathen abuses were introduced in the reign of Manasseh. But there is no mention of any law-book in connexion with this reform of worship, and the abuses which abounded at the local sanctuaries supplied ample warrant for their abolition. It is more likely that we should fix the date of the Code not earlier than in the reign of Manasseh. It was the outcome of the work achieved by the great prophets of the eighth century. The types of idolatry which are specially singled out for condemnation came into great prominence in Manasseh's reign. The later prophets from the time of Jeremiah onwards, and also the historians, exhibit the influence of Deuteronomy to a very marked degree, while the earlier prophets are free from it. But it may be asked, Ought we not to go beyond the reign of Manasseh and suppose that it was written in the reign of Josiah, and that its discovery in the temple by Hilkiah was a matter of deliberate arrangement? Quite apart from the question whether we ought to accuse the reformers of such deception there are grave reasons against accepting this view. If the book was discovered in the temple by the connivance of the priesthood we should have had to recognize that their co-operation was prompted by sympathy with the requirements of the code. At one point, however, we find that the law was not carried into effect. Deuteronomy provided for the priests of the local sanctuaries by giving them a priestly position at the central sanctuary. This obviously touched the interests of the Jerusalem priests and we are not surprised to find that it was not carried into effect. But it is hardly likely that the priests would have associated themselves with the introduction of a law one of whose provisions they defeated. We

may conclude accordingly that the book was older than the reign of Josiah and that Hilkiah's discovery was genuine and not pretended.

This may form a convenient point of transition to our consideration of the next document. This is a document commonly known as the Priestly Code which is dominated by ecclesiastical interests and written in a dry and formal style. The expedient suggested by Deuteronomy for dealing with the dispossessed priests of the local sanctuaries had proved a failure. The problem soon ceased to be so urgent, because with the death of Josiah old abuses came back to some extent, though we have no evidence that the Law was formally repealed. But the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile gave the reforming party its opportunity. The violent divorce of the people from their native land snapped the old associations and the new generation grew up in Babylon far from those sanctuaries of immemorial antiquity to which their ancestors had been bound by such close and tender ties. The centralization of the worship which was enforced against no little prejudice by a strong king excited no serious opposition from the returned exiles, when fifty years of captivity had intervened.

It was Ezekiel who prepared the way for the new state of things. He solved the problem which Deuteronomy had failed to solve by degrading the priests of the local sanctuaries from their priestly functions, and restricting these functions to the sons of Zadok, that is the priests of Jerusalem (Ezek. xliv. 10–16). This distinction between priests and Levites, which Ezekiel was the first to make, was taken up in a somewhat different form in the Priestly Code. There it is regarded as an honour that the tribe of Levi should be separated for the service of the sanctuary, and a

still loftier distinction that the descendants of Aaron should be selected for the priesthood. It is clear that Ezekiel is prior to the Priestly Code. For him the future of the Levites is an urgent problem. Had he known the Priestly Code it could have been no problem at all, he would have felt no need to legislate on the subject. That the Levites should ever aspire to priestly privileges would have been inconceivable to him. But when he had once drawn the distinction, it was natural for the Priestly Code to follow in his train; and, since it refers all its legislation to the wilderness, to represent the distinction as one made from the first rather than as a degradation due to offences lying centuries ahead of its assumed standpoint. We may accordingly fix the Priestly Code as later than the time of Ezekiel.

This date is corroborated by a whole series of arguments. We have a much more elaborate development of the cultus in the Priestly Document than in Deuteronomy, and some of the developments can be definitely traced, either to the Reformation occasioned by the discovery of Deuteronomy, or to theological causes which began to operate about the period of the exile. The centralization of the worship, which had been the main object the Deuteronomist set himself to secure, had become so much a matter of course, that in the Priestly Code it was taken for granted. A comparison with the prophets reveals that down to the time of Ezekiel no acquaintance with the Priestly Code can be traced, while there is much that is inconsistent with such acquaintance. Similarly, if we examine the historical books, the earlier historians are almost completely free from affinities with the Priestly Code, whereas the late Books of Chronicles are everywhere dominated by the completed Law. We

may therefore assume that the Priestly Code was not written before the time of Ezekiel. For a lower limit of date we have the Reformation of Ezra, which is usually assigned to the year 444 B.C.

The two remaining documents, which are commonly known by the symbols J and E, form the earliest constituents of the Pentateuch. How much older than Deuteronomy they may be it is impossible to determine. The legislation which they contain presupposes that the wilderness life is over, and that the people are settled in Canaan and practising agriculture. They can hardly therefore be the work of Moses, but if anything from Moses' hand is contained in the Pentateuch it is in these sections rather than elsewhere that we must seek it.

So far I have been mainly concerned with telling the story of Pentateuchal criticism and expounding the reasons which have led scholars to accept results differing very widely from those accepted in tradition. It hardly needs apology that such prominence should be given to the question of the Pentateuch in view of the fact that the controversy has centred around this portion of the Old Testament and in view of the far-reaching influence which these results must have upon our reconstruction of the stages through which the Religion of Israel passed. But naturally investigation did not hold its hand when it had analysed the Pentateuch and dated the documents which it discovered. The other books of the Old Testament invited a similarly searching examination, and although in some respects it can hardly be said that the work has been done with such completeness as in the case of the Pentateuch, yet a large number of definite results have been established to the general satisfaction of scholars.

I touch only briefly on the historical books. The same characteristics which force upon us the conviction that the Pentateuch is a composite structure compel a similar judgment with reference to the historical literature. So far as Joshua is concerned that has already been indicated by the common substitution of the term Hexateuch for Pentateuch, which rests on the discovery that the documents which are to be traced in the first five books of the Bible are to be found also in the Book of Joshua. But it is clear also that Judges, Samuel, and Kings are composite in structure. In the case of Judges and Kings we can without difficulty disengage an editorial framework in which the stories have been inserted. In Judges, for example, the editor has compiled the work from the standpoint of a theory of the history. This theory was to the effect that the fortunes of the Hebrews followed a regular cycle. The Israelites forsook God, then He delivered them into the hands of oppressors. They were thus brought to repentance, and then God raised up a judge to deliver them. When we examine the narratives in closer detail we find that they do not all of them illustrate this leading principle. Thus the story of Abimelech and to a large extent the stories of Samson fail to do so. It is accordingly probable that we should distinguish between the editor who formulated this theory of the history and the earlier compiler who gathered the stories together. And this is borne out by an examination of the style. But the stories themselves existed long before the compiler wove them into a connected whole. In fact they include some of the oldest sections in the Old Testament. Some of these stories are themselves not improbably composite. It is similarly easy in the case of the Books of Kings to detect the editorial framework. Here, too, the

editor writes from the standpoint of Deuteronomy, and he betrays everywhere the influence of its phraseology as well of its point of view. He himself refers to other works, now unhappily lost, from which the reader may gain fuller information. Quite apart from such an indication, however, it would have been easy to infer that a variety of sources lay behind the work. Partly the author drew on the official annals of the kingdoms, partly on a document which gave the history of the temple. But when we turn from these official and statistical records to other parts of the work, for example the stories of Elijah and Elisha, we are conscious of a marked difference in style, in standpoint, in structure, and in interest. Here we may presume that the author is drawing on some history of the prophets who had worked in the Northern Kingdom, a history already ancient at the time when he compiled his work.

If we turn back from Kings to the Books of Samuel the evidences of composite structure are very striking. If, for example, we study the story which is given us concerning the establishment of the monarchy we find two different representations. According to one, God Himself takes the initiative and raises up Saul that he may deliver the people from the Philistine oppressors (1 Sam. ix. 16). Samuel is the seer who is entrusted with the task of effecting the change. He anoints Saul in obedience to the Divine Will, and his whole attitude to the new king is quite friendly. But according to the other narrative the Philistines had been long before crushed and their aggression against Israel had ceased, so that 'they came no more within the border of Israel' (1 Sam. vii. 13). The desire for a king arose partly from dissatisfaction with the government by Samuel and his sons, partly

from their desire to be like other nations. So far is God from taking the initiative and Samuel from cordially co-operating in the enterprise that Samuel takes the request for a king as a personal insult, while God tells him that it is Himself and not the prophet whom they have rejected (1 Sam. viii.). Similarly we have a double narrative of David's introduction to Saul. According to one story David was unknown to Saul when he went out to fight the giant, and he is described as quite unused to warfare. According to another story, however, he had already been some time in attendance upon Saul as his minstrel to charm away the attacks of mania to which he was subject. Even when Saul's servants recommended him for the position they described him as a mighty man of war. Other examples of the same type might be given. It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that this characteristic runs through the book. In what is commonly known as the Court History of David, which embraces 2 Sam. ix.–xx., we have a narrative written with such intimate knowledge of the circumstances and such an insight into the motives of the characters that we are compelled to attribute it to an eye-witness who had first-hand acquaintance with the events he describes. And there are other sections in the book which probably come to us from the same writer.

It is remarkable that we should have another version of much of the history. This is to be found in the Books of Chronicles. When we compare this late post-exilic work with the earlier historical literature we are struck by several singular features. The whole period from the Creation to the death of Saul is practically filled up with genealogies. The Northern Kingdom is almost entirely ignored. The sins of

David and Solomon are passed over in silence. The author lays great emphasis on the prompt working of a rigorous law of retribution. The book is written throughout from a late ecclesiastical standpoint, and the writer applies to the doings of earlier ages the standard of the completed Law. To the same author we owe the compilation of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, in which he has incorporated precious portions from the memoirs of both leaders. The date of his work cannot, in its present form, be earlier than towards the close of the fourth century B.C., and it is possibly later.

From the historical books I pass on to the prophetic literature, and I begin with the case of Isaiah, because that is the most familiar. One of the earliest achievements of criticism was the discovery that this book was not the work of one hand. The last twenty-seven chapters, it was clear, presupposed an entirely different situation from that occupied by Isaiah. For whereas this prophet did his work in the latter part of the eighth century B.C., in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, we are transported with the fortieth chapter into the Babylonian captivity, which began in the sixth century B.C. The writer does not predict the captivity, he describes it as something already experienced by the people. If Isaiah wrote these chapters he must not simply have seen the future as a future, but he must have experienced it as a present, though when it actually became a present he had already been about a century and a half in his grave. No believer in the possibility of miracle will argue that such an experience was impossible. Isaiah may have lived this trance life among the Babylonian exiles. He may have marked their despondency and been inspired to utter his message of approaching

deliverance. Yet the firmest believer in the Divine Omnipotence cannot belittle the plea that we should have regard to the reasonableness of the Divine action. God exquisitely adapts His means to His ends, and it is a pertinent question whether a stupendous miracle of this kind was required to effect the purpose He had in view. This purpose was to console the exiles with the assurance that Cyrus would set them free and cause Jerusalem to be rebuilt, to expound the meaning of their suffering, and summon them to carry to the Gentiles the knowledge of the true God. It is inexplicable why a prophet in the eighth century should be chosen to proclaim a message which had no relevance to the conditions of his own time, and could in fact have no meaning to the Jews for more than a hundred years after his death. The analogy of prophecy leads us to anticipate that the prophet will speak to the men of his own time, and deal with the problems with which they are confronted. As new generations arise with their new problems, God raises up His messengers to deal with them. But what would be still stranger than the psychical experience of living in a future age of the world's history would be that the prophet should speak throughout to the people of that assumed time who were yet unborn, and appeal to events which had not yet happened as proving the power of Israel's God to foretell and therefore to control the future. If we are to follow the explicit statements of Scripture we must believe that, when the prophet wrote, Jerusalem lay in ruins, the people were in exile, and Cyrus had just begun his great career of victory. These things are described as having already happened. The prophet points to the rise of Cyrus as a fulfilment of earlier predictions, while he himself predicts that

salvation is soon to come. Surely it is wiser to surrender the mere evidence of a title than to set aside the definite assertions of the prophet himself. And this conclusion that these chapters are not the work of Isaiah is fully borne out by an examination of the vocabulary, the style, and the teaching. That they have qualities in common no critic would deny, but these are less important than the points of difference. For we have no reason to doubt that the later prophet had studied the work of his predecessor and been deeply influenced by it. But the differences require us to postulate for their explanation a distinction of personality.

It is popularly supposed that critics believe in two Isaiahs, one of whom wrote the first thirty-nine chapters while the other was responsible for the last twenty-seven. This is a very strange misapprehension. It is true that critics for a long while looked on the last twenty-seven chapters as a unity. It is probable, however, that the work of the Second Isaiah does not extend beyond the fifty-fifth chapter. Some assign the remaining chapters to a single writer, but this seems to me not to do justice to the differences which are to be found within this section. But be that as it may, the structure of the last twenty-seven chapters is simple compared with that of the first thirty-nine. I am far from sharing the views which are held by extreme critics either as to the extent of non-Isaianic matter in these chapters or the very late dates to which some of the prophecies are assigned. But all critics who admit the plurality of authors recognize the highly complex character of these chapters. The arguments which avail to prove the later origin of the concluding chapters are equally cogent when applied to many of the earlier.

For example, the apocalyptic section (chapters xxiv.–xxvii.) carries us beyond the exile in which the Second Isaiah uttered his message of consolation and find their worthiest occasion in the conquests of Alexander the Great, that great convulsion which overthrew the Persian Empire. This is not the place to pursue the fascinating problem of the Isaianic literature into further detail, but I have spoken of it with some fulness both because of its intrinsic importance and the prominence it has assumed in critical discussion.

Of the other prophets I may speak more briefly. Some of them present us with scarcely any problems of Higher Criticism. Of these the most conspicuous example is Ezekiel, but the same may be said of Haggai and Malachi. Joel is generally, though not universally, regarded as the work of one writer, but his date has been much contested. The balance of probability inclines towards the view that it is one of the latest books in the prophetic Canon. That only the first eight chapters of Zechariah were written by the contemporary of Haggai was one of the earliest results of criticism, but the closing chapters present a very difficult problem. It is equally difficult to solve the questions raised by Habakkuk.

But without attempting to grapple with a task which would demand both excessive space and a somewhat intricate argument, I must content myself with one general observation. It is undeniable that there is a sharp distinction between the pre-exilic and the later prophecy. The former is characterized by its severity, by its strong attack on the sins of the people, and its prediction of swift and exemplary punishment. When, however, the blow had actually fallen, prophecy changed its note and became a prophecy of comfort and restoration. The question

accordingly arises how far we must judge the descriptions of a happy future which we find in pre-exilic prophecies to be later interpolations. Although I believe that this estimate of them has been pushed to an extreme, I agree that it has a relative justification. I entertain little doubt, for example, that, the closing verses of Amos, in which the sternest prediction of extermination is followed by a luscious picture of prosperity, are a later addition. We must remember that, as conditions changed, it was not unfitting that new messages should be added to the old, and especially that harsh utterances addressed to stiff-necked and rebellious Hebrews should be softened and illuminated by a message of hope for their down-trodden and despairing descendants.

So far I have said nothing of the Book of Daniel, but I must remind my readers that this book is not included among the prophets in the Hebrew Bible. It belongs rather to the third collection, which is sometimes described as the Hagiographa. It is more properly described as an apocalypse than a prophecy. Yet, inasmuch as the one gradually shaded into the other, and there are several apocalyptic sections to be found in the Canon of the prophets, it is probable that had Daniel been written in the period of the exile and the return it would have been included among the prophets. The reason for its exclusion is presumably to be sought in the fact that when that Canon was closed the book had not yet been written. In view of its close reproduction of the early stages of the Maccabean struggle, and the events which led up to it, it is commonly held by critics that we must date it about 165 B.C., a conclusion which is confirmed by several other arguments.

A few words must be devoted to the more important

books in the third Canon. At one time it was thought by many that the Book of Job was the oldest book in the Bible. It was quite true that the scene was laid in the patriarchal period, the features of which were skilfully delineated, but this proved nothing as to the date, and evidences of acquaintance with later history occasionally shine through. That there is no reference to the Hebrew Law is accounted for, not by its pre-Mosaic origin but by the fact that Job and his friends are represented as non-Israelites. It is now generally recognized that the book is fairly late. We trace the rise of the problem of suffering just before the downfall of the Jewish state, and it had been long discussed before the stage was reached at which so elaborate a treatment could be given to it. Moreover, the problem was concerned with the suffering of the nation before it touched the suffering of the individual. The national problem is, as I have already said, discussed by the Second Isaiah, and it is probable that this was earlier than its treatment in Job. The theology of the book also points us to the post-exilic period. It may be added that the speeches of Elihu and the poem on Wisdom in the twenty-eighth chapter are later insertions, and that there has probably been some dislocation of speeches in the third cycle of the debate.

The problem of the Psalter is so large that a few points only can be touched. It was a work of gradual growth. It can be analysed into three main collections. The first contains Book I., the second Books II. and III., and the third Books IV. and V. Book I. was probably the first to be compiled, but its compilation was effected in the early post-exilic period. The third collection was the latest, and, since it apparently contains Maccabean Psalms, it probably dates from

the latter half of the second century B.C. The date of the second collection is more difficult to determine. The majority of scholars believe that it also contains Maccabean Psalms. In that case it will not be much earlier than the third collection. There are strong reasons, however, for believing that these Psalms are earlier, and if so the collection may be as early as the fourth or third century B.C. Of course the dates of the collections must be distinguished from the dates of individual Psalms. How many of these come down to us from the pre-exilic period it would be impossible to say. But it seems an exaggerated scepticism to deny the inclusion of any pre-exilic Psalms in our Psalter. It is probable, however, that the number is not large. Whether among these any are to be attributed to David must be left an open question. Even if their existence is recognized it would be impossible to identify them with any confidence. The great majority of the Psalms probably belong to the Persian or the Greek periods.

That in many respects the critical view of the Old Testament differs widely from the traditional will be abundantly clear from what I have said, but I trust that our subsequent discussion will make it plain that the loss we feel is more than counterbalanced by the new reality which it has conferred on the Bible and the firmer apologetic position in which it has placed it.

CHAPTER X

THE CONSERVATIVE REPLY TO THE OLD TESTAMENT CRITICS

I HAVE now traced the course of Old Testament criticism and in a very abbreviated fashion indicated some of the grounds on which the vast majority of Old Testament scholars have signified their acceptance of its results. I have not, of course, been oblivious of the fact that these results have met with strenuous resistance on the part of many theologians. In fact I have already indicated the attitude adopted by them to some of those phenomena which have forced critics to abandon the traditional position. But it is only right that I should now proceed to speak more fully on this side of the subject. Obviously I could not be continually interrupting my exposition of the critical case by constant reference to the objections urged against it. It would have left only a confused impression on the mind of my readers had exposition been continually broken off for polemics. It is fitting, however, that at this point I should say something with reference to the strictures passed by defenders of tradition on the critical case. The signs are multiplying, we are told, that the critical structure which has commanded the field for more than a quarter of a century will soon be captured, that its ramparts are being undermined by the spade of the archæologist, while the extremists within the citadel are playing into the hands of the

enemy. We have heard it all before. Almost ever since it became my duty to study Biblical criticism, triumphant prophecies of a reaction have been a constant feature of the situation. Still, however ardently desired and confidently predicted, the fact remains that the reaction has not come, and, to tell the truth, shows little sign of coming. Accordingly my pulses do not quicken with excitement when I learn that some new refutation of the Grafians has been published. I have heard it too often, and have seen the Grafian criticism survive the threatened exposure. Nor if reaction came is it to be assumed that it would come in the desired direction. From Ewald to Wellhausen was out of the frying-pan into the fire, and from Wellhausen to Winckler would be out of the kitchen fire into Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. In fact, it is quite amusing to watch the attitude towards Winckler taken by opponents of criticism. To some he stands as the representative of the Higher Criticism, while others take comfort in his recent refutation of Wellhausen. As a matter of fact Winckler's theories have found very little acceptance among critics of the Grafian school, and anyone who imagines that to discredit Winckler is to discredit criticism is simply living in a fool's paradise.[1]

Those who are rooted and grounded in their faith that the traditional view is untrue are not likely to be

[1] On Winckler, see below, pp. 172–176. Dr. Orr, who shows a strong tendency to play Winckler off against Wellhausen, has no sympathy with Winckler's views, which he regards as more revolutionary than anything which has gone before. He speaks of the 'fantastic tricks' associated with Pan-Babylonianism, and says 'An extreme newer phase is the "Pan-Babylonianism" of the Winckler school, against which Old Testament scholars are setting themselves with sturdy determination.' (*Review and Expositor*, Oct. 1906).

greatly disturbed by the news that an anti-critical dynamite has been invented which will blow us into the air; and as the prophecy that we are likely to be soon in full retreat grows wearisome from repetition, it becomes less easy to arouse us even to a languid interest from what our opponents would call the self-satisfaction of the so-called Higher Critics. But it may be asked, is it not true that the signs are really accumulating, that after its almost unchallenged supremacy among Old Testament scholars they are themselves beginning to waver in their allegiance, while from other sides a formidable attack is being developed which is likely to lead to the speedy collapse of the fortress? And is not wisdom once more justified in her children who have held fast the old positions in the serene confidence that in God's good time those who assailed them would be driven like stubble before the storm? It is, of course, quite true that there are features in the situation which give some colour to these confident predictions, but I do not regard these as really bearing them out.

On some of these I have touched at an earlier point. I have dealt at length with the argument which weighs much with many Christians—that loyalty to our Lord's declarations forbids us to renounce the traditional views as to the authorship of Old Testament books. With the fullest acceptance of our Lord's Divinity, for which I have elsewhere argued explicitly, with the fullest recognition that in matters of religion and ethics He was our court of final appeal, I tried to show that His words did not bar out, and were never intended to bar out, the most unfettered investigation of the questions of literary criticism. I have also dealt with the objections that the critical treatment of the Old Testament is inspired by disbelief in the miraculous, that it is inconsistent with any recognition of its

inspiration, and that it denies the explicit statements as to authorship contained in the Bible itself. It will be seen that these objections are notice boards warning us off forbidden ground. They are intended to persuade us that we are embarked on an illegitimate enterprise, that if only we take our Christian faith seriously we shall have nothing to do with the unclean thing. In the eyes of those who utter them, we are consorting with the enemies of the faith, and they address to us the cry, not always in the sweetest accents, to come out from among them. Indeed, one could say much on the wholly unfitting tone in which some opponents of criticism speak of their fellow-Christians. This kind of language is not only worse than useless, since it succeeds simply in irritating those whom they should seek to win; but its effect must be to create a doubt in the mind of many readers how far these self-constituted apologists have understood the religion they profess to serve and how far they have learnt to exemplify the meekness and gentleness of Christ. But while in certain cases the chief qualifications are facility in vituperation and a talent for caricature, some of the best representatives of tradition, such as Dr. Orr and the late Dr. C. H. H. Wright, are happily free from the rancour which is such a scandal to Christianity.

Naturally, however, the traditionalists seek to fight the critics on their own ground and to show that their arguments really will not bear the weight which it imposes upon them. Before coming to detail I have myself some preliminary remarks to offer. In the first place we do well to remember that the opposition does not, as a rule, come from acknowledged experts in the field of Biblical scholarship. Very largely it comes from dogmatic theologians. Now I readily grant that we must not make too much of this. If the broad lines

of the critical case can be made intelligible to intelligent Christians who have no familiarity with the original languages, we ought not to think that we have disposed of a writer's objections to criticism by the reminder that he is ignorant of Hebrew. In some departments of Biblical scholarship such a disqualification would, of course, be fatal. It is unquestionably a disadvantage for critical study. Yet, looking at the matter broadly, I do not conceive this deficiency to warrant the conclusion that the arguments of such an opponent are to be treated with neglect, as though they did not count. I am not, of course, forgetting that there are eminent Hebraists who have ranged themselves against the critics. But we must remember that Old Testament scholars may permit their criticism to be dominated by what are properly extraneous considerations, and it is certainly the case that objection to critical results has, at any rate in some instances, been inspired by theological considerations.

On this point I will quote the statements of a learned opponent of criticism. In his two works on Daniel, entitled respectively *Daniel and His Prophecies*, and *Daniel and Its Critics*, Dr. C. H. H. Wright frankly confesses that 'it is unwise in the present state of information to rest the defence of the book of Daniel upon the historical narratives therein recorded.' He pronounces the line of argument taken up by Pusey, Urquhart, and Anderson to be injudicious. He himself lays more stress on the prophetical part, but what is decisive for him is the authority of Christ. In both books he makes emphatic statements on this point. It would occupy more space than I could spare to transcribe these at length, but I must find room for some brief quotations. He says, 'A professedly Christian commentator ought to follow

the teaching of Christ. The books of the Old Testament, viewed from a Christian standpoint, derive their authority from the recognition accorded to them by our Lord and the Apostles. The historical parts of the Old Testament endorsed in the New Testament writings ought to be accepted by Christians as true.' And again, 'We decline to admit that the Christianity of the Bible has yet to be created out of the ever-fluctuating opinions of critics who consider themselves wiser in their own departments than the Lord Jesus or His Apostles. We confess to be among those who deny the right of any men in Divine matters to go beyond the teaching of the New Testament. We are quite willing to learn from critics on any questions on which no distinct teaching can be found in the New Testament. But in cases where the New Testament utterances are plain and distinct we humbly desire to adhere to its teaching and submit to its authority." These quotations will suffice to establish my position that even those who may be reckoned as Old Testament scholars in the fullest sense of the term, but who disagree with the views of their colleagues, are, at any rate in some cases, constrained to do so, not on critical but on theological grounds. I am myself in much sympathy with their theological position in general, but I gravely dissent from their inference that this rules out the critical view of the Old Testament as illegitimate. When, however, we are told that eminent Hebraists reject the critical conclusions, it is pertinent to ask whether they do so for critical or for doctrinal reasons.

I have already touched on the threadbare misrepresentation that the critical theory rested on the assumption that writing was not invented in the time of Moses. I do not, of course, deny that such an assumption may have been made by some scholars. But the promin-

ence assigned to it has been greatly exaggerated, and for a long time it has ceased to fill any place in the critical argument. Nevertheless this long obsolete accusation is still paraded as a triumphant refutation of the critical view. Some time ago I went to hear Father Ignatius preach. He took his text from Job and began by telling us that this was the oldest book in the world, it was written in fact before writing was invented. 'You know,' he said, 'that the Higher Critics said Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing was not invented in his time.' Then we had the well-worn reference to Tel el-Amarna and Professor Sayce, who 'called at our monastery,' and the consequent collapse of the Higher Critics. 'However,' he went on, 'they've jumped up again on some point or other; for you must know, my friends, that Satan is very clever.' No one, of course, who knew anything about the subject would attach the slightest weight to anything Father Ignatius said upon it, but I quote him since he expressed the prevailing ignorance very faithfully. As a matter of fact it would be very difficult to find much evidence for the attitude he attributed to critics. The antiquity of writing was recognized long before the discoveries at Tel el-Amarna and it has played next to no part in the discussion. Accordingly, it is a serious misrepresentation to say that the critical case was affected by the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets. I have already alluded to the discovery of these documents, which proved that in the fifteenth century before Christ the Babylonian language and script were used over a wide area outside Babylonia, including Egypt and Canaan, to a degree of which we had previously no conception. Later discoveries have pushed back our documentary material to a very much earlier period. But this makes no real difference

to Pentateuchal criticism. Critics had been perfectly willing to grant the probability that writing was much older than the time of Moses long before this had been proved. They did not argue for the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch on the ground that Moses could not write. It is true that they regarded it, and still regard it, as a question how far we may assume that Hebrews, who had been ground down by Egyptian bondage, could have been spoken of as in any sense a literary people. But no critic would feel that his confidence in the truth of the critical theory was shaken in the slightest if he learnt that the emancipated Hebrews had attained a far higher level of culture than we can, on our present information, believe them to have possessed. His belief rests, as I have already shown, on entirely different grounds.

It might similarly be shown that other statements as to a reaction are not calculated to bring the comfort to the opponents of criticism which those who make them too fondly believe. Not infrequently, as a considerable experience in this type of literature has proved to me, the refutations of criticism rest on strange misunderstandings of the critical position. I well remember counting in an article of this kind eleven mis-statements in as many lines. In a book that professed to give an account of critical theories as to the Pentateuch, the author was so ignorant of the elementary facts that, being unaware that Wellhausen used the symbol Q (i.e., Quatuor, the Book of the Four Covenants) for the document now commonly called P, after he had given a description of the latter, went on to explain that there was another document called Q which had mainly to do with covenants. We want someone who will mind his P's and Q's better than that. The student cannot be warned too emphatically that, as a rule, it is not

safe to trust the statements on Old Testament criticism given by defenders of the traditional position. Unfortunately, people who write against criticism often seem to consider themselves exonerated from the necessity of acquiring any accurate information as to the views which critics hold, and the grounds on which they hold them. It would be quite easy for me to fill pages with illustrations of this disregard for the elementary ethics of controversy. It would be a good thing if those who write against criticism would get someone who really understood the subject to read their refutations before they were published, since in this way the descriptions would gain immeasurably in accuracy, and their attacks in relevance. And I would recommend those who imagine that its opponents have demolished the critical case to make themselves acquainted with it, not simply in the works of its opponents, but in the authoritative statements of its defenders. Even some of the books, which in this respect stand far above the usual level do very scanty justice to the critical case. Those who know the case simply from the statement of opponents have no right whatever to an opinion on the subject. Even of so eminent a scholar as Professor James Robertson, Stade is provoked to say that what he refutes in his *Early Religion of Israel*, is a caricature of the critical view. And whatever verdict we may pronounce on this, it is unquestionably true of many who have rushed in to defend the ark. Their work is recommended neither by grasp of the facts nor by sobriety of judgment. And they have yet to learn that it is not enough to sit down and pick what holes they can in a theory they dislike. They must look at it from the inside, and not simply from their own standpoint before they can deal effectively with it.

I pass to another statement often made. It is that

'the attack on the Bible,' or 'rationalistic criticism,' or whatever other opprobrious and question-begging title the objector chooses to adopt, having failed in its assault on the New Testament, is now making a determined onslaught on the Old Testament. This is usually followed by the reassuring prediction that the failure of the Tübingen criticism will be repeated in the failure of the Grafian, which will follow its predecessor to the lumber-room of discarded absurdities. Grattan once said in the Irish Parliament, 'Mr. Speaker, you cannot argue with a prophet, you can only contradict him,' but sometimes one is so fortunate as to be able to do both. Whether the prospect that the Grafian will go the way of the Tübingen criticism is calculated to bring much comfort to those who are familiar with the present condition of New Testament criticism in Germany is irrelevant to the present purpose, but would repay some consideration. In any case, however, the parallel will appear to many to yield a very apt and telling argument. I shall return to the Tübingen criticism at a later point; meanwhile I may devote a few sentences to it, that the point of the argument may be clear. As is well known, F. C. Baur, the founder of the Tübingen School, saw everywhere in the primitive Church the conflict between the Pauline and the Petrine parties. The legalism of the Judaisers, the antinomianism of Paul, the particularism of the former, the universalism of the latter, were arrayed in an antagonism which embraced not principles only but persons in its scope. The original antagonism between Paul and the primitive Apostles gradually softened through mutual approximation until the Jewish Christian and Pauline tendencies blended in the Catholic Church, the higher unity in which the old antithesis had been overcome. Only four genuine Epistles were left to Paul,

Romans i.–xiv., Corinthians, and Galatians, and the Book of Revelation to the Apostle John, as it was believed to reveal a bitter hostility to Paul. All the other books of the New Testament were supposed to be later, since they exhibited a retreat from the original fierce opposition. It is generally agreed that this criticism is dead; though it has left a deep and enduring mark on the handling of the subject. It must be admitted that Paul aroused an envenomed enmity among the extreme Judaists, and one cannot feel the attitude of such a leader as James of Jerusalem to have been other than unsympathetic. It was one of the merits of the Tübingen School to force the antagonism into prominence; though I think it would be the unanimous verdict of New Testament scholars that Baur and his colleagues exaggerated the significance of it beyond measure. They explained the development of the primitive Church into the Catholic Church of the second century almost entirely from the interaction of these two tendencies, whereas we can now see clearly that a large number of other factors were at work, which the Tübingen critics left out of account, or to which they attached far too little importance. Yet it is more to my present point to express the misgiving I have felt for many years that reaction has swung too far in the opposite direction and that recoil from the extravagance of the theory has carried some critics into undue disparagement of the evidence which could be marshalled in its favour. The fact of its enormous influence attests the presence of some truth in it, which it is our business to retain; and there are phenomena to be accounted for, of which it offered some explanation. No one who has worked at the subject can deny his debt, directly or indirectly, to Baur. He gave the greatest stimulus to investigation and was the first to

set many of the problems of New Testament science and Early Church History. But this does not exhaust our debt to him. His views were one-sided, extreme, often unhistorical, but there was a residuum of positive truth in them that we cannot afford to neglect, and he initiated a method which is our permanent possession.

There are many considerations which warn us against the too hasty inference that Kuenen and Wellhausen will see their theory relegated to a place beside Baur's. The argument, I suppose, rests on the consideration that history repeats itself. So it may, more or less. But the real question is—Are the two cases parallel? It will be easily seen that they are not. It is useless to institute a comparison between them in order to discover a basis for prediction. There seems to be no reason whatever in the nature of things why the criticism of the Old Testament should run the same course as the criticism of the New. The conditions are entirely different. The limits of date are far more rigidly determined in the case of the New Testament than in that of the Old. In the latter our earliest evidence for the authenticity of some disputed writings is separated by many centuries from the time to which tradition assigns their composition. What evidence there is is extremely scanty at the best. Nearly all our criticism has to be based on internal evidence, and it is only from examination of the books themselves that we can reach valid conclusions about them. In the New Testament all is different. The evidence, while it leaves some range of uncertainty, is on the whole, both early and extensive. We have a wealth of external testimony which goes back to a very early period and is very convincing, quite apart from that which we derive from the study of the books themselves. We have also early manuscripts, the textual history of which requires us to

place the original documents themselves at a far earlier date. Further, we have weighty corroboration from archæology, such as, in spite of the numerous statements to the contrary, has certainly not been supplied to disputed sections of the Old Testament. It is, therefore, clear that since the cases are so dissimilar no argument can be founded on a parallelism which does not exist.

In the next place it is well to remember that there was never anything approaching the large consensus of scholars in favour of the Tübingen theory which it has been possible for a long time to claim on behalf of the Grafians. Several of the most eminent New Testament scholars in Germany, some of them quite free in their attitude to the Bible, were never ranked in the school of Baur. It is true, of course, that Old Testament scholars, pre-eminently Dillmann, held aloof from the Grafian theory. But there is this significant difference between the two cases. While time weakened the Tübingen ranks by defection or diversion of interest to other fields, it has strengthened the hold of the Grafian criticism. The most noteworthy of all its recent triumphs has been the adhesion of Nöldeke, who is among the foremost of our Semitic scholars. His adhesion is all the more remarkable that more than forty years ago he refused to admit the validity of Graf's arguments, and it is only the sheer weight of evidence which has at last forced him to announce a change of view. I am not forgetful of defections from the dominant critical school, but of these I will speak directly.

Nor must we forget that the Tübingen criticism rested on a philosophic principle, and the history of primitive Christianity was read in the light of it. But for the fact that Baur was a Hegelian it would probably never

have come into being. But it may be asked, Is not the same thing true of the Grafian theory? Do not both start from philosophical presuppositions, which are identical? Is not the spirit which animates their attack 'a veiled Hegelianism'? Is it not ominous that Vatke and George, the first to publish it, were themselves Hegelians, and that Vatke's exposition of Israel's religious history was constructed on Hegelian lines and expounded in Hegelian terminology? This is perfectly true, and I have already called attention to it. But Hegelianism is not of the essence of the Grafian criticism. The theory was reached by others on non-philosophical grounds; especially was this the case with Reuss, who actually had expounded these views in his classroom before Vatke's work was published, and who was positively deterred from reading Vatke's book by the sight of its Table of Contents with its repulsive Hegelian terminology. And this is characteristic. The most eminent of the Tübingen critics —Baur, Zeller, and Schwegler—were philosophers, the most eminent exponents of the Grafian theory have not been such. The Tübingen theory rested largely on a preconception as to what the course of history must have been, the Grafian theory has been built on a firm foundation of hard facts derived from the literature itself. It has been adopted by critics of all kinds of metaphysical and religious standpoint, not through any *a priori* theories as to what the history must have been, but in deference to a multitude of phenomena which research has brought to light in the Old Testament. There is, accordingly, good reason for what might strike any one unacquainted with the subject as an inconsistency. I mean the very frequent combination of radicalism in Old Testament with conservatism in New Testament criticism.

In another case history serves as a basis for prediction. We are told that the history of criticism warns us only too emphatically against the futility of supposing that we have reached finality. Fashions change; some time ago Ewald was all the rage, and it was thought that Old Testament criticism had been placed in an impregnable position. But now it is the Grafian school, and Kuenen and Wellhausen have settled all the main problems, and made the history of Israel for the first time intelligible. And they will pass away like Ewald, and some new school will hold the field, and give way in its turn. Or the argument has taken this form: It will be time to discuss what the critics have to say when they have settled their differences among themselves; or, We have only to enjoy the spectacle of these mutually destructive theories making away with each other. It is the internal divisions of the critics that give to these statements whatever cogency they possess. And thus Satan is set to cast out Satan. Wellhausen is played off against Dillmann, Winckler against Wellhausen. The theories, we are told, 'eat each other up,' a feat which reminds us of the Kilkenny cats. It is not unusual to pit scholar against scholar, on the principle, one may presume, that when critics fall out, traditionalists will come by their own. The discordance of experts is urged to prove that the traditional theory is right; but the one fixed point with the great majority of experts is that, whatever theory is true, the traditional view is false. I may take a parallel case. I suppose that no well-informed critic would now uphold the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes. It is irreconcilable with the linguistic character of the book and with its whole tone and point of view. But the critics are not agreed as to its date, many placing it in the Persian period and many in the Greek. But no one

would seriously suppose that this difference of opinion constitutes an argument in favour of the older view. Or take the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews. If we are entitled to be dogmatic about any point in New Testament criticism, it is surely this, that Paul did not write it. And yet how much disagreement there is as to the authorship! Barnabas, Luke, Clement, Apollos, Priscilla, have all been credited with it. Few, however, I presume, would argue that because scholars are all at sixes and sevens on the matter their disagreement does anything to rehabilitate the theory of Pauline authorship. The one fixed point in both cases is that the traditional view is wrong, and the difference of opinion among critics does not make it right. A negative conclusion in these matters may frequently be reached with certainty where a positive conclusion is impossible. It is often quite easy to show that a document could not have been written by the author to whom tradition assigns it, but its actual authorship may remain altogether uncertain, and the limits of its possible date may lie centuries apart.

Moreover, the extent to which critics differ is constantly exaggerated. The unwary reader might easily be misled if he had no information as to the real state of the case. On the main problems critics have reached a very large measure of agreement. The Grafian criticism was an advance on its predecessor not a reversal of it. The new criticism took up and accepted very many of the results reached by the old. So competent an opponent as Dr. Orr agrees that if the results held by the two schools in common are accepted, the later carries out these results to their logical issue, the criticism of the mediating school, best represented by Dillmann, being an illogical compromise. And is not this all that we can fairly ask? No science is full-

grown at its birth, it proceeds by tentative steps through many blunders to ever clearer perception of the truth. I suppose we must not complain if the opponents of criticism create the impression that they make the range of divergence more prominent than the facts warrant, if differences are accentuated and agreements are ignored. The fact, however, remains that, as will have been clear from earlier chapters, a very large consensus of opinion has been reached on the main issues. No doubt when we come to detail there is considerable divergence of view and it is not surprising that this supplies the traditionalists with not a little of their ammunition. One would, in fact, imagine that where such disharmony existed they regarded themselves as exonerated from recognizing the existence of any problem at all. But the disagreement is largely due to the complexity of the problems, and is no more than is familiar in other departments of historical and literary investigation. A more prolonged study has in fact shown that the earlier critics, so far from overrating, often underrated the complexity of the problems. When we are taunted with the mania for excessive analysis the answer is ready to hand. A critical theory is simply an endeavour to do justice to the phenomena of the documents. As investigation goes forward and new facts come to light, the theory has to be modified to fit them. Hence we have the somewhat elaborate attempts at splitting up the main documents and detecting the work of redactors and editors. It is not fair to make too much of this. On the one hand, the excesses of analysis should not be used to discredit the analytic method altogether, and the critics constantly point out that their attempts at minuter discrimination of sources are quite tentative, and that an element of uncertainty must necessarily hang over

them. On the other hand, it is clear that growing familiarity with the documents may sharpen the sense of the investigator for finer and finer analysis. The clues which he follows to unravel his tangled skein seem altogether too intangible to people whose fingers are all thumbs. If we are bent on settling these matters by *a priori* principles, it is natural enough to scoff at the idea that even if the documents had been composed on the lines suggested by the critics they would ever have been able to discover the process and its detailed history.

In this connexion I may call attention to the strange parallel which has now and again been drawn between the Pentateuch and the novels of Besant and Rice. Has any critic, we are triumphantly asked, ever succeeded in analysing their work and assigning to each of these authors his own portion? But obviously there is all the difference between an artificial literary product, written by a couple of self-conscious novelists, with whom style was necessarily a deliberate study and whose work was meant to be a unity and represent the same point of view, and the composition formed by the blending of two or more distinct works, the spontaneous products of unsophisticated writers who were giving without any artifice of style a plain unvarnished tale. I may add that criticism has been at work on the Pentateuch for a good deal over a century, that an army of keen-sighted investigators has been enlisted in its service, that they have gone over the text with a microscope, collected phenomena of all sorts pointing to difference of authorship, and have been so successful in their work that many of their most strenuous opponents have been compelled to recognize partially, if not completely, the validity of their literary analysis. And it is by no means certain that if the novels of Besant and

Rice had been put through the same process the results reached might not have been equally convincing, only in their case no one would think the labour worth while.

The analytic critics frequently meet with the objection that books are not compiled as critics affirm that the Pentateuch was put together. And this is quite true of the books with which objectors are familiar. A modern historian studies all the information which earlier authorities can give him and then writes a new account on the basis of his research. If he quotes from one of the original sources or from a historian who has treated the subject before him he is careful to indicate that he is quoting, by the use of inverted commas and explicit reference to his authorities. Hence when the Biblical scholar puts forward a theory of composite authorship, when he professes to go back behind the documents we possess and largely recover the documentary sources from which they have been put together, he meets with an initial prejudice on the part of his reader who is asked to believe that here a method of procedure has been followed which has no parallel in the literature with which he is familiar. But if only he knew his Bible better he would have felt some hesitation in pressing this criticism. The Books of Chronicles for example present us with long extracts from the earlier historical books, which are inserted without any indication that such was their origin. Similarly the Synoptic Gospels exhibit a surprising extent of coincidence which can be accounted for only on the assumption that they drew upon common sources. Or one might refer to the way in which the Second Epistle of Peter has incorporated much of the Epistle of Jude. But quite apart from Biblical examples of the very processes pronounced to be incredible, a little reflection might have sufficed for the reminder that the

Bible is not a Western but an Eastern book and that there is no necessity why the authors should conform to what appears to us the proper method of writing history. Robertson Smith long ago illustrated this from the practice of Arabic chroniclers who write history just along the lines on which critics say the Pentateuch was compiled. Examples are given in the *Cambridge Biblical Essays* by Prof. Bevan, so that the reader who is unfamiliar with Arabic Chronicles has not to be content with a general statement but can see the process exemplified in long quotations. Thus there *are* parallels to the process pronounced in the outraged name of common sense to be inconceivable.

At this point it might be well to say something as to the recent attempts to discredit the clue to analysis afforded by the Divine names. The most notable case is that of Eerdmans. He was a pupil of Kuenen, and now occupies at Leyden the chair formerly held by the great critic. For a long time he adhered to the generally accepted view, so that his defection may well seem a very ominous fact. For why should a man go back on his training and his earlier faith and confess that he had been completely mistaken unless the reasons were grave indeed? It must of course be remembered that his breach is not simply with the Grafian theory but with the documentary analysis altogether. In the first part of his *Alttestamentliche Studien* he explained that he had been led to a different view as to the Divine name Elohim from that taken by critics, and therefore rejected the analysis based upon it. I believe it would be a mistake to attach any special importance to his withdrawal. It is sensational rather than momentous. Although the distinction of the Divine names is the most famous clue to the analysis, it is perhaps not the most important; but in any case a

multitude of phenomena converge on the generally accepted critical analysis, as is confessed, not simply by Grafians and the older critics, of whom Dillmann was the most distinguished of recent representatives, but by many opponents of criticism such as Dr. James Robertson. Before anyone can hope to convert us to the denial of documentary analysis he must deal with those phenomena. The fact that the criterion of the Divine names is not the most convincing ground for analysis is readily proved by one simple fact. Leaving Deuteronomy aside, critics distinguish three main documents in the Pentateuch, known by the convenient symbols J, E, P. The first of these uses Yahweh, the other two use Elohim as a proper name. Our criterion then would have simply enabled us to recognize two documents, one of which would have used Elohim in this way and the other not. Not only, however, has it been possible to draw by other criteria a clear line of distinction between the two Elohistic documents, but they are separated by far more striking differences than those between the Elohistic document E and the non-Elohistic document J. The limitations of P have been settled to the general satisfaction of all schools, whereas a large measure of uncertainty still hangs over the analysis of J E. The variations in the Septuagint have perhaps been unduly neglected, but I am convinced that an excessive importance has been attached to the element of uncertainty which this introduces. No variant in a translation can be counted a real variant unless we have good grounds for believing that it existed in a Hebrew manuscript, and even then it does not follow that it is the original reading. Moreover it is true in the case of Eerdmans, as in other cases, that the attack on criticism is if anything worse than the criticism itself and more unacceptable to tradition-

alism. His interpretation of Elohim conservatives would be the first to repudiate. He believes that polytheism is to be found not simply in the Book of the Covenant where he first observed it but elsewhere. We have legends in which Elohim stands for a plurality of deities and Yahweh for one of them. This interpretation the traditionalists would hotly reject. Moreover, while Eerdmans sets aside the current analysis, he analyses on his own lines and recognizes not only pre-exilic but post-exilic sections. His discussion of Deuteronomy has not yet been published, but the allusions he makes suggest that he takes the critical view of it. It is accordingly not surprising that he hesitated for a long time before he published his work, just because he feared that the traditionalists would see in it a vindication of their position which he was far from wishing to supply.

Another name with which the conservative moral is not infrequently pointed is that of Winckler, who has been very vigorously seconded by Jeremias. But it equally well points the other moral, for the acceptance of his theories would be a far more serious matter than an acceptance of the comonly received critical hypothesis. Since any rod is good enough for the backs of the Grafians, people are only too ready to cry ' Up with Winckler,' because that means ' Down with Wellhausen,' without asking themselves whether ' Up with Winckler ' does not mean an even worse condition of things, from the traditional point of view, than that which prevails at present. Again, it must be remembered that Winckler's special theories, while brilliant and ingenious, rest at present on somewhat speculative combinations. The conception of the universe which Winckler believes to have been formulated in Babylonia at a very early period, and to have dominated the

religious creed and practice of antiquity, has been put together by him out of scattered data and, so far as we know, never had any existence till it was formulated by his brilliant and ingenious brain. It involves the conclusion that the Babylonians had reached a height of astronomical knowledge which is antecedently all but incredible. For example, they must have known the precession of the equinoxes. Jeremias actually suggests in one place that they may have had optical instruments, and that the modern invention of the telescope may have been the rediscovery of a miracle of civilization lost for thousands of years. Much more evidence than he is able to bring would be needed to make such a suggestion seem anything but fantastic. It would carry me too far to expound in any detail Winckler's astral theory, suffice it to say that the universe was regarded as divided into a celestial and an earthly world, in both of which there were three subdivisions, the heavenly and the earthly corresponding exactly to each other. Our earth answers to the zodiac, and it is thus possible to read in the heavens the history of the earth. The heavenly bodies were identified with the chief gods. If therefore the phenomena of the heavens can be understood, man has found out what the gods are going to do. It was thus possible for the astrologer, in virtue of this co-ordination between heaven and earth, to forecast the future. The astrologers seem to have thoroughly believed in their own system and naturally studied with the closest care the changes in the appearance of the heavens, especially of the moon and in a less degree of the sun and the planets. Of the latter Jupiter and Venus were the most important, since they were identified with Marduk and Ishtar.

Curiously enough the liver of animals offered in sacrifice was supposed also to be a representation of the

universe from which the priest might read the will of the gods and the course of fate. This method of divination, Hepatoscopy as it is technically called, seems to the modern mind singularly irrational. There was, however, a plausible defence of it; the fault lay in the underlying principles rather than in the logical character of the deductions from it. The full explanation of the system and the grounds on which it rested would involve a very long discussion. Here I can find space only for the most general description. The sacrificial animal was believed to be united to the deity to whom it was dedicated. The soul of the animal was attuned to the deity, so that it was possible by the examination of the animal soul to understand the mind of the deity who controlled future events. The sanctity attached to blood not unnaturally suggested that the seat of the soul was in the liver, one-sixth of the blood in the human body, for example, being contained in it. To read the soul of the animal, and thus divine the purpose of the god, was effected by studying the conformation and the markings on the liver of the sheep, which was the animal invariably used. These are never precisely the same in any two animals, and most elaborate directions were given for reading the signs.

Experts generally have taken up a sceptical attitude towards the astral theory, however amply they may acknowledge its ingenuity, not to say its audacity, and it is rather difficult to see what ground there is for the assertion that the younger scholars of Germany are rallying to Winckler's side. Even if one were to admit that he had rightly reconstructed the Babylonian view of the universe we should still be a long way from the conclusion that Israel was, intellectually and religiously, just a mere province of Babylonia, to which, on highly speculative grounds, Winckler practically re-

duces it. Unquestionably there are very remarkable coincidences between the Old Testament and the Babylonian myths, especially the stories of the Creation and the Deluge. But while the coincidences are undeniable and point to ultimate derivation of the Hebrew stories from Babylon, the significant thing is the way in which the mythical element is minimized in the Hebrew form and the ethical element introduced.

Some Old Testament scholars under Pan-Babylonian influence, notably Baentsch and Volz, have been inclined to emphasize the originally monotheistic character of Hebrew religion on the ground that monotheism had been reached in Babylonia and Egypt. Some accordingly have seen in Baentsch's work on the subject a veritable portent, heralding the downfall of the dominant school of criticism. In this I cannot follow them. We have to remember that not only has the proof of Winckler's theory still to be given but there is the question whether we have adequate ground for believing that the doctrine was so widely diffused in Western Asia as is assumed. Moreover, while Baentsch's conclusions, if they were correct, would affect the construction of the history of the religion which has been most popular with critics, it would not affect, so far as I can see, the critical position in the strict sense of the term. It would indeed have been an amazing thing if this eminent scholar, whose too early death we had recently cause to deplore, had gone back on all the critical work that is to be found in his *Das Bundesbuch*, his *Das Heiligkeitsgesetz*, and his masterly and extensive commentary on the middle books of the Pentateuch. If I understand aright the reference on page 108 of his *Monotheismus*, he held fast to the abiding value of the Grafian criticism. He expressly referred in this connexion to the historical position assigned to the Law.

He explicitly dissociated himself from the account of early Hebrew religion given by Wellhausen and Stade. But, while doing so he made it quite clear that his dissent did not touch the Grafian theory, which he considered it the merit of these and other critics to have established. For my own part I have never felt that I should compromise my Grafian orthodoxy by placing Hebrew monotheism at the fountain head of the religion. At the same time I have never been convinced that it held this position, but have inclined to the belief that down to the eighth century the religion was characterized by monolatry rather than by monotheism. I may add that Benzinger, in the recently published second edition of his *Hebräische Archäologie* (1907), while he has revised the work in a thoroughly Pan-Babylonian sense, and follows Winckler very closely, adheres to the usual analysis into four documents. He reverts (with Winckler) to the view that E is the oldest, but he bases his history of institutions on the assumption that the Grafian date of P is correct. What Pan-Babylonianism may come to, can be seen from Jensen's *Gilgamesh Epos*, which turns nearly all the sacred characters and incidents of the Old and the New Testament into forms of that story. And perhaps our apologists would do well to practise rather more caution when they avail themselves of such Pan-Babylonian views as may seem to come in handy for the attack on the Grafians.

This brings me to the alleged veto of archæology. We constantly hear that the discoveries in this field have completely discredited critical conclusions. It it well known on the other hand that there has been no such stampede as is asserted, that several archæologists accept the main critical results and that some go far beyond the opinions of critics in their scepticism of

traditional views. Nor is it true that archæology even on the lips of criticism's bitterest opponents rehabilitates tradition. We have only to remember their treatment of Daniel and Esther to convince ourselves of this, or the acceptance of the literary analysis on the part of some of them. It is very difficult in reading them to know whether what they give us is a fact or something which one or two scholars believe to be a fact, or some ingenious combination which rests purely on hypothesis. The lack of knowledge as to the kind of evidence required to prove their case is sometimes remarkable, as is their failure to see exactly what they want to prove. Sometimes 'confirmations' are flourished as if they overthrew critical opinions when as a matter of fact they are confirmations of what no sober critic has ever doubted. How hollow the contention is that criticism has been discredited by the monuments may be seen from Dr. Driver's statement that if everything Prof. Sayce says in his *Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments* were correct he would have to alter only two statements in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, both of them conservative statements. The fourteenth chapter of Genesis always figures very prominently in this discussion, but here as elsewhere statements are made of the most extravagant and unwarranted character. A measure of doubt still hangs over the identification of the four kings, but no one would guess from the anti-critical accounts of the controversy that those who had most sharply criticized the historicity of the narrative had, even before the discoveries, now paraded as proof of its historical character, had been made, freely granted that even more than has yet been verified might very well turn out to be correct. Admitting all and more than all which the monuments have since established they nevertheless held that the narrative

was unhistorical. What has subsequently come to light was fully allowed for in this estimate. The discoveries were discounted before they were made, if indeed they have been made, which is more dubious even now than some are willing to admit. Besides, these discoveries, as they have a way of doing, if they settle some problems, raise others. In particular it is difficult to harmonize the view that Abraham was a contemporary of Hammurabi with the most probable date for the Exodus, the interval between Abraham and Moses being then much too long.

The prophecy that we are going to dig up a cuneiform Pentateuch in Palestine is only another glaring example of the truth that uninspired prediction is one of the most gratuitous forms of folly. Were such a discovery to be made it would hit the critics hard, but it may be questioned whether it would not hit the conservatives harder still. For while criticism helps apologetics by explaining that the inconsistencies in narrative and legislation have not unnaturally arisen through the combination of different documents and the fact that the legislation was spread over a long period, those who stand for the traditional view have the problem of accounting for these discrepancies in a much acuter form, especially when they link with it, as they commonly do, a rather high theory of inspiration. The critical theory rests in other words on a mass of phenomena in the Old Testament itself, and the critic can therefore await with equanimity whatever the spade of the explorer may bring to light, since he is assured that while archæology may conceivably confirm a Biblical statement that has been doubted, it cannot well in the nature of the case also affirm a statement that directly contradicts it.

Another point may be touched upon not because it is of

any intrinsic importance but because it is so frequently made prominent. It is by now a fairly old reproach that our criticism is made in Germany. Of course we expect no better than the use of 'German' as a symbol of what is wild, speculative, and extreme on the lips of the ignoramus, such as the man who in the course of a violent address on Herbert Spencer repeatedly spoke of him as 'that German philosopher.' But even learned Professors sometimes indulge in suggestions of this kind. Thus Dr. Orr invites us to be less dependent on German speculations and have the courage to call our souls our own. I cannot for my part see what nationality has to do with criticism. The true antithesis should not be between German and British, but between true and false. If we follow German and Dutch lead here, we do so not because we are critical little Englanders, any more than Dr. Orr rejects it because he is a critical Jingo, but because we have convinced ourselves that the arguments by which the Grafian theory is supported are sound. A theory need be none the worse because it is made in Germany. And how little the believing critics to whom Dr. Orr directs this appeal really deserve his censure for slavish dependence is clear from the attitude adopted by many on the problems of New Testament criticism. Were we afraid to call our souls our own we should be industriously retailing Holtzmann and Pfleiderer, Wellhausen and Wendland, Wrede and Wernle and Schmiedel. But here many of us, who assent to the critical conclusions of the leading Old Testament scholars in Germany, dissent from some of the German leaders in New Testament criticism, though we freely admit that we have learnt a great deal from them. And we are by no means without eminent allies in Germany itself. Of course, Dr. Orr will insist that we really don't know

what we are doing, or we should see the fatal inconsistency of our position. Thus he says : ' This, one may be excused for thinking, is a defect of our critics of the more believing school ; that they do not sufficiently recognize the solidarity which exists between the theory of religious development which they reject, and the critical opinions which they retain, and, in consequence, do not do justice to the logic of their own positions ' (*The Review and Expositor*, Oct. 1906). He seems in fact to think that the moderate criticism represented by many of the leading Old Testament scholars in Great Britain has no real right to existence. If we were only thorough with it we should go over to the extremists. But we must take leave to assure him that we do understand quite well what we are about, and are quite ready to defend our combination of radicalism in Old Testament criticism with a moderate conservatism in the criticism of the New. The charge that criticism is based on rationalistic presuppositions has much more relevance in the latter than in the former case.

Yet the critical aspect is on the whole quite subordinate, and those who combine loyalty to the evangelical faith with an acceptance of the main critical results might very well feel that Dr. Orr draws the line of demarcation where it ought to be drawn and that they stand on his side of it. After all, the fundamental antithesis is not between criticism and traditionalism. It is between rationalism and what, for want of a better term, may be called supernaturalism. Dr. Orr would, of course, urge that those of us who accept the critical position are weakened for our war with rationalism. Strategically he will claim that his position is much the sounder, and that the logic inherent in our acceptance of critical views is likely to force us into ultimate capitulation. I must content myself with reasserting

my belief that our position is by no means so exposed as Dr. Orr considers, and that what he says to us might very well be said to him by those who view with hostility such concessions as he has made to the anti-traditionalists. But on his main contention I rejoice to find myself at his side. The things which supremely matter touch the question, What think ye of Christ? Is the universe a closed order for us, which admits of no such breach of continuity as the Incarnation would involve? Is Jesus man's highest point of human aspiration towards God, or is He the stooping of God to man? And according as we come to this answer or to that so shall we construct our theory on other theological issues. On this subject Dr. Orr, as is to be expected, takes a firm line. The real Divinity of our Lord, the revelation of God in the Old Testament and in the New, and that in a unique sense, the real inspiration of the Biblical writers, the actual emergence of the miraculous in sacred history—on all these points he leaves no room for question as to his opinion.

Lastly it must not be forgotten that those who stand out as the most prominent defenders of tradition have made very serious concessions to criticism,[1] and those

[1] It may be worth while to put together some of these concessions in Dr. Orr's *The Problem of the Old Testament*. The author admits 'an element of "idealization" in the Biblical narratives' (p. 93, cf. p. 87); that a considerable part of Genesis can really, by the use of the criterion of the Divine names, be divided into Elohistic and Jehovistic sections (p. 196); that 'the Pentateuch has a *history*—that, like other books of the Bible, it has undergone a good deal of revision, and that sometimes this revision has left pretty deep traces upon the text' (p. 226); that it is not necessarily implied in the recognition of 'a substantially Mosaic origin of the Laws,' 'that Moses wrote all these laws, or any one of them with his own pen; or that they were all written down at one time; or that they 'underwent no subsequent changes in draft-

who imagine that their works rehabilitate tradition would probably be surprised to see how different from the rigidly traditional is the attitude they have been forced to adopt. These concessions have been wrung from them against all their prepossessions by the sheer pressure of the evidence. In the judgment of the vast majority of Old Testament scholars they are far below the minimum of what will ultimately have to be accepted.

ing or development ; or that the collection of them was not a more or less gradual process ; or that there may not have been smaller collections, such, e.g., as that lying at the basis of the Law of Holiness—in circulation and use prior to the final collection, or codification as we now have it ' (p. 328) ; that the sections ascribed to P ' have a vocabulary, and a stylistic character of their own, which renders them *in the main* readily distinguishable ' (p. 335) ; that the differences of style and vocabulary within P itself render probable the idea ' of a *process* of composition, rather than of a single author ' (p. 340) ; that Deuteronomy ' shows traces of editorial redaction ' (p. 251), ' editorial revision and annotation ' (p. 283) ; that ' there are marked differences between the Deuteronomic and the J E and P styles ' (p. 253) ; that ' there may be a measure of freedom in the reproduction of the speeches ' in Deuteronomy (p. 380) ; that 'the extremely detailed character of the prediction in chap. xi ' (of Daniel) ' may point to later redaction ' (p. 458) ; that the inscriptions ' afford valuable aid in rectifying the Bible chronology ' (p. 426). To these may be added the significant modifications of the older view of the Pentateuch in the general statements on pp. 369 and 376.

CHAPTER XI

THE CRITIC AND THE APOLOGIST

The previous discussion may have left a somewhat disheartening impression on many readers. They will have felt, perhaps, that some of those beliefs, which have meant so much for their religious life, rest, if what I have said be true, on an uncertain foundation, and that the literature which has done so much to enlighten, inspire, and control them is not what they have fondly supposed it to be. I trust that while such an impression is natural it will become clearer and clearer as the discussion proceeds that criticism has given us even more than the traditional view was able to do. But it is desirable at this point to raise the question explicitly of the relation in which criticism and apologetics stand to each other.

I have already tried to demonstrate that the very nature of the Bible as an historical work makes criticism inevitable, since historical method requires us to place the criticism of documents at the basis of a historical reconstruction. I have sought to show that the antecedent objections which are frequently urged do not prevent us from approaching the critical problems with a view to solving them by critical methods. But, while this may be freely granted as a matter of principle, the question is bound to be raised whether the results actually reached are not such as radically to affect our Christian faith. Such a question is vital to critics who

feel that it is not open to them to save their results at the expense of throwing overboard the Christian religion. But just here I touch one of the most ominous features of the present religious situation. We are told that critical results have proved fatal to belief, and there is no reason to doubt the fact. But before condemning these results out of hand, as many are inclined to do, we must raise the question whether they ought to have been fatal. My own conviction is that what is to blame for this deplorable condition is not criticism but the false view of Scripture which had been presented as an integral part of Christianity. Relief must be sought neither in the rejection of Christianity on the one side, nor in repudiation of the critical results on the other, but in such a revision of our conception of Scripture as shall enable us to be loyal to both.

It cannot be denied that a period of transition such as that through which we are at present passing is one in which results are not always easy to estimate, or the issues easy to gauge. The dislocations involved in our change of views jar and distress us. With our natural tendency to be at ease in Zion we resent the disturbance of our cherished convictions. Yet the history of the past should prove at once a warning and an encouragement. It should warn us against leaping to premature conclusions, against making Christianity answer with its life for the correctness of our traditional theory. Is it not enough that we have before us the humiliating history of the conflicts between science and theology? We are too ready to condemn our predecessors for stoning the prophets of science, too reluctant to ask the searching question how far we are walking in their steps. The Copernican theory of the universe was denounced as inconsistent with the Bible; and a plausible case could be built up for the view that the

whole Christian scheme was shattered by the proof that our world is but an infinitesimal item compared with the vast masses that exist throughout stellar space. Yet Christianity survived the destruction of the Ptolemaic theory, though this was more revolutionary than the established results of criticism are ever likely to be. But astronomy does not stand alone, nor is the name of Galileo the only one that can bring a blush to the cheek of those who value the fair fame of their religion. It is wholesome for us to remember our unhappy record with reference to geology. That could not be true, because the Book of Genesis said that the world was created in six days. But only a few obscurantists would venture on such a position to-day. The belief in the antiquity of man, which archæology has forced us to accept, was for long vehemently contested in the interests of Old Testament chronology. The theory of evolution is still denounced because it is supposed to be precluded by the Bible. And who does not recall the horrible sacrifice of human life, often after the infliction of the most atrocious torture, because the belief in witchcraft and the duty of the death penalty were conceived to be necessitated by the Old Testament? It is no pleasure to emphasize the blunders of the past, but they are recorded for our instruction and we must beware of repeating the folly of our fathers, and making claims for the Bible which we shall be unable to substantiate. We must put our foot down firmly somewhere, but let us take heed that we put it down only where we can keep it down.

I am not concerned to deny that Old Testament criticism brings a measure of loss with it. The Bible reader a hundred years ago felt that he had a sure knowledge of much that is now either doubted, disproved, or

shrouded in obscurity. The story of Creation as told in the early chapters of Genesis, the happy innocence in which our first parents lived, their disobedience and expulsion from Paradise, the rapid and monstrous development of sin, the Flood which well-nigh swept away the human race, the patriarchal history, the bondage in Egypt, the Exodus, the elaborate Mosaic legislation, all these were familiar to him, and no shade of misgiving as to their historical accuracy ever crossed his mind. He read the Old Testament in the light of the New and traced the gradual unfolding of God's purpose to send His Son to redeem the world, obscurely hinted in the prophecy that the seed of the woman should bruise the woman's head, growing clearer and clearer till it came to full and radiant expression in the prediction of the Virgin's Son, Immanuel, of the Messianic King, and the Suffering Servant of the Lord. But now how vast is the difference! The primeval history is subject to the gravest doubt. The chronology is definitely disproved, much which passed for certain is now seen to be very dubious, and the bewildered reader not unnaturally inquires where he can find rest for the sole of his foot. Even the prophecies which seemed so clearly to predict the coming of the Messiah he learns are otherwise interpreted. Isaiah will not have given an event which was to happen more than seven hundred years later as a sign to reassure Ahaz of relief in his immediate necessities, and the figure of the Servant of Yahweh is definitely identified by the prophet with Israel. Then, again, what meaning the Psalms had for him when he could read so many of them as expressions of the experience of David! Now that his authorship is reduced to such slender limits, or even set aside altogether, there is not the same reality about the spiritual

history of David that there once was. Thus the tender and familiar associations with which so much of the Biblical literature was endeared to the reader have departed, and in their place we have a series of anonymous compositions whose date cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Not unnaturally many good people feel an unreasoning prejudice against any attempt to discuss this subject in a scientific way. But the interests of religion are better served by finding out the circumstances under which individual Psalms were written than by inventing elaborate myths about David to account for his authorship of Psalms that he never wrote.

In these and other respects the reality of the loss can hardly be denied. So far as the primeval history is concerned, however, it is not criticism but science and history which have made the difference. For tradition did not assign the composition of the Pentateuch to a date earlier than the time of Moses, and an interval of more than two and a half millenniums lay between his date and that to which the Creation was assigned. And if criticism has detached many writings from the names of their traditional authors, if it has shown that books hitherto regarded as unities were composite in character, surely the gain of this far outweighs the loss. It is good for the Bible reader to have it brought home to him how largely anonymous the Old Testament writings are. He is too prone to demand the name of the human author, and, when it is not given, to anchor a piece of literature to some well-known name. The Book of Job is anonymous, but many could not be content to leave it so, and so they ascribed it to Moses. But we ought to find the anonymity suggestive. The writers did not care for personal reputation. They were too absorbed in their task to covet literary

fame. Their message was their supreme concern ; the messenger gladly concealed himself behind it. But this is not all. The whole drift of the earlier tendency was to concentrate inspiration in a few channels of revelation. The drift of our modern investigations is to insist on the wide range of inspiration, the multitude of writers, the large outpouring of the Spirit. And this seems to be a clear gain since it brings home to us the richness of religious life in Israel which could produce such a splendid galaxy of writers. I suppose that some have the uneasy feeling that to deny the traditional authorship of a book is to depreciate its value. But the book remains what it is, whoever wrote it. I am reminded of Thiersch's striking saying, 'If it should turn out that a great painting which had been attributed to Raphael was not his work, but the work of an otherwise unknown artist, there would not be one great picture the less, but one great painter the more.' And not only was inspiration distributed over a much larger number of individuals, but it was active in periods which tradition regarded as unfruitful. How barren on the older view were the four centuries of silence which lay between Malachi and John the Baptist, how rich in inspired works that period has become for the modern critic ! The gap which used to yawn between the Old Testament and the New is now seen to be largely illusory, and we have a continuous development culminating in Christ.

But one of the greatest gains which criticism has brought to many of us is that it has made it easier for us to believe in the Divine element in the Old Testament. Of this one of the most conspicuous examples is afforded by Pentateuchal criticism. I confess that on the traditional theory I should find it extremely difficult to accept the Divine origin of the Mosaic Law. I have

already pointed out the presence in the literature of regulations which are at direct variance with each other. The traditional theory represents God as giving through Moses three sets of laws; the third of these agrees in many respects with the first, though it is more detailed, and in some important points there is divergence. Wedged between these two codes there is a large mass of legislative matter which in numerous important points it is hard to reconcile with the other two. It is not possible to regard the first as temporary legislation devised for wilderness conditions, since it contemplates a set of people engaged in the practice of agriculture, and is therefore designed for Palestinian conditions. The traditional view accordingly represents Israel as beginning its national life in Canaan with laws given by God to Moses, which are, nevertheless, largely inconsistent with each other. If we cannot evade the conclusion by denying the facts, the question is forced upon us: How can we regard mutually inconsistent precepts as given by God through the same legislator for the same people in contemplation of the same conditions and with a slight interval only between two of the codes? I do not see how the Divine origin of the legislation could reasonably be maintained on this hypothesis. When, however, we regard these laws as given at different times in Israel's history, and as designed to meet very different conditions, our difficulty in recognizing their inspiration largely disappears. Here criticism has proved to be a bulwark of faith.

This is an example of a principle which has a much wider range, and that is the close adjustment of revelation to the time at which it was given. This is one of the characteristics which has been brought out most impressively by the modern study of the Bible, and it

imparts a reality to the literature which on the older view was too often lacking. And not only is there this adjustment, but the preparation for Christ in the religion of Israel is filled with a new meaning, when we have dated our literature correctly and can watch the movement as it steadily advances from its lowly origin in the early beliefs and practices of the Hebrews till it attains its consummation in the coming of Christ. Of this I shall need to speak again when I come to discuss the permanent value of the Old Testament. And in the same way I shall have to point out how our modern view of the Bible as a progressive revelation destroys at a stroke many of the difficulties which once were raised touching the morality of the Old Testament. The same thought also saves us from the peril of illegitimately reading back the New Testament into the Old, or later into earlier stages of the religion of Israel itself. Moreover, when all is said and done, whatever view of criticism we adopt, the Old Testament remains a colossal fact which has to be accounted for. On these points, however, I do not at present linger, since they must be discussed in more detail at a later stage.

But although Old Testament criticism raises a problem in Apologetics, it is the New Testament rather than the Old which is crucial for us, and those who have followed me so far with hearty agreement, in the consciousness that what I have said does not touch the essence of their faith, may not unreasonably feel some trepidation as they approach the problem of New Testament criticism. I wish to make some general remarks on this aspect of the subject before I proceed to a more detailed exposition. In the first place we must hold fast our principle as to the legitimacy of Biblical criticism. If we admit it with reference to the Old Testament we have no right to exclude it

when we come to the New. In it also revelation assumes the garb of history, and we have no right to warn off the critic from the field of history. In the next place we cannot deny that the issues are really serious for Christianity, much more so than in the case of the Old Testament. It might, for example, turn out as the result of our inquiry that not only traditional views as to authorship broke down under our investigation, but that the history itself emerged greatly shaken from the ordeal. But the question might be put, Does it really matter if the history should have to be thrown overboard? What is important for us, it may be urged, is not the facts but the teaching, not the question whether the Ideal Character actually lived on earth, but the presentation of the Ideal Character itself. I have dealt with this problem explicitly elsewhere and urged that with all the risks attending it we must maintain the inseparable connexion of Christianity with history.[1] Accordingly we cannot, in my judgment, approach New Testament criticism with the light-hearted feeling that, whatever our results may be, they will not matter. We must make up our minds that they may matter a great deal, for nothing less than Christianity itself is at stake in our inquiry.

But it would be a great mistake to make an illegitimate application of this principle. It is not all results which would be fatal to the Gospel. If, for example, we reached the conclusion, on historical grounds, that Jesus of Nazareth never existed, or that we have no information we can trust respecting His life and teaching, if we should see ourselves driven to deny His execution, or, acknowledging it, to believe that it was the end of Him, it is hard to see how Christianity in any tenable sense could remain our belief. In all these respects the Gos-

[1] See *Christianity: Its Nature and Its Truth*, chap. VIII.

pel is inseparably united with history and a blow struck at one would inevitably hit the other. I have previously given my reasons for believing that the Gospel passes safely through this ordeal and that its vital facts may still be heartily accepted. But there are other results which would not, I think, be fatal. They might maim our presentation of the Gospel, they would not stab it to the heart. This is true to a large extent with reference to problems of literary criticism. The origin and mutual relations of the Synoptic Gospels, the authorship of the Fourth Gospel or the Apocalypse, the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles; these are important questions, but we may enter on the discussion without the feeling that the interests of Christianity are vitally concerned in the results we reach. Even in the domain of fact the same thing is true. While I have argued for the supernatural birth of Jesus, I have also affirmed my conviction that a negative conclusion ought not to destroy our faith in His Divinity. With these considerations in our mind we may approach the discussion of New Testament criticism.

CHAPTER XII

THE CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The criticism of the New Testament is not wholly a creation of modern times. It was practised in the ancient Church, an admirable example being the discussion by Dionysius of Alexandria of the relations between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse. The stagnant acquiescence of subsequent times in the officially-received conclusions as to authorship was disturbed by the Reformation when Luther and Calvin, along with others, boldly challenged traditional opinions. In the exigencies of the Roman controversy the later Protestant theologians were driven to a very high doctrine of inspiration and a very conservative attitude on questions of authorship. Accordingly the era of Protestant scholasticism was marked by a retreat from the freedom which had characterized the fresh religious awakening that had come with the Reformation. As a result of this it is only recently that orthodox Protestants have been willing to face the possibility that the accepted views may need critical revision.

Just as Old Testament criticism in its modern form took its rise with Astruc, though he had several predecessors, so we may date our starting point for modern New Testament criticism from the work of Baur and the Tübingen School.[1] The reason why so much import-

[1] I have dealt explicitly with this in my Inaugural Lecture

ance is attached to Baur, the critic to whom we owe so much in the way of stimulus and challenge, does not lie simply in the very wide influence which his criticism exercised alike on adherents and opponents, but in the fact that Baur was the first to lift the subject out of the atomistic treatment which had been accorded to it, to treat the New Testament books not as individual units but as an organic whole, and to connect the growth of the literature at every point with the development of the Church. Whatever be the verdict based on his general theory or on individual results, there can be no dispute as to the service he rendered in the introduction of a new and a fruitful method.

I pointed out in an earlier chapter that Baur was a Hegelian. He reconstructed the history of Primitive Christianity by the application of Hegel's formula that thought moves through thesis and antithesis to synthesis, through a conflict of opposites to reconciliation in a higher unity. Translating this from the general abstract principle into the particular concrete application, his theory was as follows : The Christianity of the primitive Apostles was Judaistic. It held to the necessity of the Law for all Christians, and that Gentiles if they were to enjoy the blessings of the Gospel must submit to the yoke of the Law. Over against this rose its antithesis or contradiction. Paul proclaimed freedom from the Law and the validity of the Mission to the Gentiles. By a gradual process of mutual approach, softening of antagonism, and elimination of extremes the Catholic Church of the second century was created in

at the University of Manchester on ' The Present Movement of Biblical Science,' and in my recently-published *Critical Introduction to the New Testament.* Accordingly I may confine myself to a somewhat briefer summary than it would otherwise have been necessary to give.

which the two tendencies that had at first stood in bitter antagonism were harmonized and blended in a higher unity. The legalism of the Jewish Christians held its ground on the one side, the universalism of Paul maintained its hold on the other.

Now it was quite plain that the New Testament documents contained much which contradicted Baur's theory. So much the worse for the documents! Since they did not yield the pure milk of the Hegelian philosophy of history, it was clear that they were largely adulterated. Only four Epistles of Paul were allowed to be the great Apostle's genuine work—Galatians, Corinthians, Romans i.-xiv. The Apocalypse was left with the Apostle John, since it was supposed to contain an acrimonious attack on the apostolic status and teaching of Paul. The other documents were dated by the place they held in the movement from hostility through compromise to Catholicism. The most extreme or polemical writings were placed earliest, those that were least coloured by controversy or most marked by tendency to conciliation were placed last. So the literature was dated to match the history as thus reconstructed.

In spite of the vast learning and massive argument devoted by Baur and his brilliant followers to the propagation of this revolutionary theory, it could not permanently hold its ground. The school was weakened by defection and also by the fact that some of its most eminent representatives abandoned New Testament criticism for other fields of research. And the progress of investigation has set steadily in another direction. The very late dates to which Baur relegated many of the New Testament writings have been practically universally abandoned. The order in which he placed some of the books, an order necessitated by his

theory of development, has also been given up. Thus the Gospel of Mark was considered by Baur to be the latest of the Synoptists, because it bore the slightest marks of the antagonism of the parties. With very few exceptions scholars of all critical schools are now agreed that Mark is the earliest of the Synoptists. The Fourth Gospel has been brought back to a date half a century earlier than that to which Baur assigned it. Again, the genuineness of most of the Pauline Epistles is recognized even by advanced critics.

The antagonism which Baur discovered in the Early Church he is now believed to have greatly exaggerated. The importance which he attached to such polemical literature as the Clementine Homilies and Recognitions, anti-Pauline romances of a late date, is seen to have been excessive. It is questionable whether any scholar whose opinion deserves serious consideration would now regard the Revelation of John as containing an attack on the Apostle Paul. The view that the Acts of the Apostles supplies a distorted history of the Apostolic Age expressly designed to suppress or smooth over the old quarrels between Paul and the primitive Apostles, and represent them as in perfect harmony instead of being at daggers drawn, finds few, if any, supporters to-day. Alike in principle and in detail the theory lies in ruins.

The causes of this collapse are not difficult to discover. Baur thought that he could solve the problem of the origin of the ancient Catholic Church by the action of a single principle—the conflict between Jewish Christianity and Paulinism. But this was altogether too simple. One of the chief gains of more recent study has been a conviction of the immense complexity of the problems presented by early Christianity, and the certainty that no single solution will do. Other factors

had to be taken into account. Pre-eminent among these was the influence of the Græco-Roman environment. For example, Baur made much of the fact that the characteristic teaching of Paul fell into the background in the Church of the second century. In this speedy oblivion he found a confirmation of Jewish-Christian antagonism to Paul. But really a much more reasonable explanation lies ready to hand.

No one can read the Pauline Epistles without feeling how intensely Jewish they are. Paul brought his Rabbinism to some extent with him into Christianity. He looked at the Gospel from the point of view of the Old Testament and Jewish Theology, as well as from the new standpoint given to him by his Christian experience. But it was just this Jewish element which made it difficult for Gentiles, who brought entirely different presuppositions from heathenism to the interpretation of the Gospel, to understand him. It was not the influence of the dwindling minority of Jewish Christians which thrust Paulinism into the background in the second century, but the incapacity of the Gentile Christians, with all their reverence for Paul, to understand him.

Another defect in Baur's handling of the subject was of an analogous character. He spoke of Judaism as if Judaism was a homogeneous thing. But this was far from being the case. There were numerous currents in the contemporary Judaism. Not only were there the three commonly recognized sects—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes—there was also the piety of the common people, which had more affinity for the Gospel than any of these sects. There was the type of Judaism which is reflected in the Apocalyptic Literature. There was also the Judaism of the Dispersion, notably the Alexandrian Judaism. The latter

had been profoundly influenced by Greek philosophy. It is still a problem to what extent the non-Alexandrian Judaism had been affected by its Pagan environment. The importance of this question will be clear when it is remembered that the synagogues in the Dispersion largely provided the early Christian missionaries with a starting-point for their propaganda.

The main stream of advanced critical opinion has been in the direction of a much fuller acceptance of traditional views. It would, however, be unwise if I were to ignore the fact that there has been a critical movement in the opposite direction. There are those who consider that Baur's main fault was that he did not go far enough. They deny the genuineness of the New Testament literature altogether, and claim that in doing so they are carrying Baur's principles to their logical result. I do not regard this school of critics as really important. Nevertheless, in view of the prevalent misconceptions which are industriously circulated, I think it is imprudent to imitate the example of those who pass it by in contemptuous silence. When once the authenticity of all the Pauline Epistles has been challenged it is desirable to indicate the grounds on which we may still maintain it, though their rejection be a view which fails to commend itself to the vast majority even of radical critics.

The main ground on which these critics rely is that the belief in the genuineness of the Pauline letters presupposes altogether too rapid a development of primitive Christianity. They think it incredible that within a few years of the death of Jesus so violent a break with Judaism as Paulinism was could have occurred. In reply to this I must urge that the very conditions which gave rise to the primitive Church made such a break with the Law almost inevitable. I

have pointed out elsewhere (see p. 318) that the historicity of Jesus is guaranteed by the story of His crucifixion. No Jew could possibly have invented the scandal of the Cross concerning any one whom he regarded as the Messiah, for crucifixion was a death on which the curse of the Law rested. But this in itself makes it clear that some such movement as Paulinism was inevitable. For as soon as ever a thinker arose who set before himself the question, What does the confession of a crucified Messiah mean? the relation of the Gospel to the Law was bound to become an acute problem. The question could not be avoided, How are you to adjust your belief in a crucified Jesus to the fact that the Law holds the crucified accursed? Given a thinker sufficiently bold and logical to work out what was involved in this situation, and the rise of Paulinism shortly after the death of Jesus will appear not simply credible but inevitable. Even were we to treat the Epistles as purely human productions, it would be altogether to underrate the possibilities of genius to suppose that a great speculative intellect could not have broken so decisively with Judaism and constructed a religious theory such as we find in the Pauline Epistles.

But the argument does not stop there. Why was Jesus crucified? He was crucified partly through the disappointment of the people, but still more through the antagonism of the religious leaders. But why were the religious leaders antagonistic? It was because Jesus was so unsparing a critic of their religious theories and practices. Now the importance of this for our purpose lies in the testimony it bears to the inward antagonism which existed from the first between Jesus and Judaism. Accordingly it was not the crucifixion alone which raised the problem of the Law. This had been foreshadowed by the teaching of the Master before He met His fate.

But, while the conditions for the rise of the Pauline Epistles were present long before the first century of our era had half run its course, we have not the slightest evidence that the question occasioned any deep interest at the time when the ultra-radical critics believe that the Pauline Epistles were written. It was quite other concerns than the permanence of the Law which claimed the Church's attention.

Moreover, the literary history of the time decisively forbids the theory. About the year A.D. 140 Marcion compiled a collection of Christian writings consisting of ten Pauline Epistles and a mutilated Gospel of Luke. Marcion was separated by his theological opinions from the great mass of his fellow-Christians, who held his views in abhorrence. From this we may infer with certainty that the Epistles were neither composed by Marcion himself nor in his school. Such an origin would have been fatal to their acceptance by the Church, which would never have derived its classical documents from so tainted a source. Moreover, the fact that Marcion accepted them proves that, antagonistic as he was to the current ecclesiastical dogma, he recognized the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles. This is all the more striking in view of the fact that in several respects they did not harmonize with his own convictions. Accordingly he submitted them to a process of expurgation on the ground that they had been corrupted by interpolation and alteration. We may infer with certainty that they cannot have been late productions, but had for long held a position of unique authority in the Church.

To this I might add that the acceptance of the Epistles as genuine by the Church would be an insoluble puzzle if they were really spurious. For the Pauline Epistles reflect a type of Christianity very

different from anything we find in the second century—indeed, we might say somewhat uncongenial. The point on which I have already laid stress, the neglect of Paul in the second century, and the failure to understand him even when his Epistles were known and read, sufficiently indicates how alien from the temper of the time much of his writing was felt to be. It is therefore unlikely that such Epistles would have been written at that time, and, even if written, would have been accepted without question by the Church.

And it is especially difficult to suppose that Epistles could have been accepted which were addressed to individual Churches. In Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Philippi, there were Christian Churches which had had a long and continuous history. How could any second-century forger palm off on these Churches letters which claimed to be addressed to them, but of which they had never heard?

But the letters themselves forbid the hypothesis of such an origin. The precise but often trivial details that abound in some of them, the extremely complex relations between Paul and the Churches which they exhibit, above all the colossal and many-sided personality which they reveal, attest their genuineness beyond all reasonable question. One must be strangely blind to reality if he fails to realize that it is a living personality dealing with concrete vital issues that is responsible for these letters. How any one could read the Second Epistle to the Corinthians and imagine that he was dealing with an artificial historical situation is inexplicable. The very complexity of the history which it presupposes, the allusiveness of it, the passionate emotions which it expresses, are all unequivocal signs of authenticity. To doubt the genuineness of such a document is hypercriticism run mad. It is a human

document which bears its credentials on its face. I have not yielded to the temptation of dismissing the whole theory without more ado, though I understand that when criticism has fallen into such arbitrariness and subjectivity one might naturally be disinclined to spend time on a patient examination. The experienced scholar is well aware that many theories which have ultimately failed to justify themselves have had the advantage of forcing neglected facts into the light. But while I believe that we are not well advised if we unceremoniously reject all novel suggestions which seem to us revolutionary, I cannot feel that the hypercritics have appreciably advanced the study of the subject. There is such a thing as the scientific use of the imagination, and brilliant intuitions are sometimes confirmed by detailed research; but if anywhere, then here we may say that this is not a theory destined to win wide or weighty acceptance. There is no conclusion of criticism more certain than that the great bulk of the Pauline literature is the work of Paul of Tarsus.

I must now indicate the present position of critical opinion, explaining the reasons for the positions which I am constrained to adopt. In doing so it will be necessary for me rapidly to traverse ground which I have covered at much greater length in my *Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, to which I would refer those who may be interested in reading a fuller exposition of my views.

We have seen good reason for accepting the all but universal opinion of scholars that the Pauline literature must be regarded as in the main genuine. Even in the Tübingen School itself Hilgenfeld initiated a reaction by accepting three Epistles—1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon—in addition to Baur's four, and also the authenticity of the last two chapters of the

Epistle to the Romans, thus substituting, as he put it, the sacred heptad for his master's heathen quaternion. His judgment in this respect has been endorsed by almost all critics—in fact, Baur's lines of demarcation between what was genuine and what was spurious were drawn with no little arbitrariness. It was difficult to give any solid reason why, if the Epistle to the Romans was accepted, that to the Philippians should be rejected. The great Christological passage (Phil. ii. 5–11) does not really go beyond what is implied in certainly authentic passages. It was a singular failure in literary tact to imagine that the exquisite letter to Philemon could by any possibility be an invention. And what must we think of a writer who when composing 1 Thessalonians put in Paul's lips the expectation of the Second Coming during his lifetime when he knew that it had been falsified? On the genuineness of these Epistles it is unnecessary to linger.

The case is different with some of the other Epistles. There are some scholars who reject the Epistle to the Colossians, rather more who reject the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, still more who reject the Epistle to the Ephesians. All advanced critics and some rather conservative critics refuse to believe in the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles, though even here they are inclined to admit a genuine Pauline nucleus. I may point out first of all that in the case of Epistles addressed to Colossæ and Thessalonica, it is very hard to believe they can be other than authentic, in view of the fact that no protest was made from either of these places against their acceptance as the work of Paul. With Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles the case is somewhat different. According to the best text the words 'in Ephesus' were not in the original Epistle, and it has been held by a large number of scholars that

the Epistle was really a circular letter addressed to a large group of Churches, Ephesus probably being included among the recipients. In this case we cannot appeal so confidently to the absence of protest against its recognition, since no one Church is mentioned as having received it. With still less confidence can we urge this argument in favour of the genuineness of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

But this is a consideration which is independent of any detailed examination of the Epistles themselves. The absence of protest may not count for so much in the case of Ephesians as in the case of the other Epistles, still it counts for something. On the other hand we could conceive that a letter might be spurious, even though no such protest had come down to us. The objections have to be weighed in detail before a final verdict can be given. Naturally in a brief discussion like the present any elaborate examination is out of the question.

The Epistle to the Colossians has been rejected partly on account of its style, which is heavier and slower, and its vocabulary, which diverges a good deal from that of the generally accepted Epistles ; of its advanced doctrine of Christ's Person ; of its conflict with the false teaching which is thought to be second-century Gnosticism ; of its relations to Ephesians ; and for minor reasons. The number of unusual words is not, however, exceptionally high, and the subject-matter of the second chapter sufficiently accounts for the employment of many of these. The difference of circumstances largely explains the difference of style. In the four great Epistles Paul was fighting against unscrupulous antagonists for the very life of the Gospel. Colossians also was directed against a form of false teaching which was incompatible with the Gospel.

But the peril was by no means so serious. It was with no slanderous and fanatical agitators who sought to poison the minds of his converts against himself and his Gospel that Paul had to deal, but with a type of false doctrine which he could easily meet. Moreover, Paul was now a prisoner and no longer in the flood-tide of his activity, living crowded days of action and writing his letters at white heat. It was one thing to dictate letters in the rush of a busy life to churches in rebellion and in danger of losing their faith; quite another to write to a loyal Church from the enforced leisure of a prison. Seclusion and meditation imparted a very different quality to his style. The doctrine of the Person of Christ is not higher than what we find in Philippians, it is fundamentally Pauline, and when it shows advance, it is a simple development of what was implicit in the Christology of the earlier Epistles. Personally I do not believe that the type of false teaching attacked is Gnostic in its character, it is rather Jewish without trace of Gnosticism, but, if it is Gnostic there is no reason why such rudimentary Gnosticism might not have been developed in Asia by the middle of the first century. The relation to Ephesians presents a unique phenomenon, but it tells rather against Ephesians than Colossians, since the latter is probably the original on which the former is based. And if Ephesians were an imitation by another writer, it is surely improbable that he would imitate a spurious Epistle.

The difficulty about 2 Thessalonians arises partly from its remarkable similarity to 1 Thessalonians, partly from the difference which is discovered in its forecast of the future, partly from the character of the section on the 'man of lawlessness' in the second chapter. The first of these may not unreasonably be accounted for by the suggestion that, in view of the misunderstanding to

which his earlier letter had given rise, Paul thought himself back into the circumstances of its composition, and not unnaturally fell into the same train of thought and mode of expression. The difference in anticipation is no greater than is found elsewhere, and there is no real discrepancy. In the First Epistle Paul says that the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night on those who are unwatchful. In the Second Epistle he warns his readers that its coming is not immediate, a certain development has first to take place. Similarly Christ describes the Second Coming as sudden, and yet points out several signs which are to lead up to it. The section on the 'man of lawlessness' contains some things which do not meet us elsewhere, but this is by no means an unexampled phenomenon in the Pauline letters, and all the features of the description were quite possible long before Paul's time. He may have drawn on an ancient apocalyptic tradition, but, even if this was not the case, history had already supplied figures that might have sat for the portrait of Antichrist, such as Antiochus Epiphanes in the Maccabean period and the Roman Emperor Caligula.

Against the genuineness of the Epistle to the Ephesians the most weighty objection is the style. Even those who are inclined to a conservative view have not infrequently felt it hard to recognize the genuine Paul in this letter. I grant that the objection is by no means frivolous, yet the Epistle to the Colossians provides us with a kind of bridge which makes the transition to the style of this Epistle much easier. The other objections are less cogent though they have a measure of force, they touch mainly points of theology, the relation to Colossians, and modes of expression. To the best of my belief the hypothesis of genuineness is less difficult than that of spuriousness.

With the Pastoral Epistles the case is different. The objections to their genuineness are of a very serious character, and there is a strong consensus of opinion among scholars who are not fettered by traditional views, that in their present form they cannot be from the hand of Paul. I do not, it is true, feel that all the objections are weighty, but I find it difficult to believe that Paul was released from the imprisonment recorded in the Acts, and it seems to me that, if genuine, the Epistle must be assigned to an otherwise unknown period of his life. Further, while I do not think that the organization is necessarily too advanced for Pauline authorship, the ecclesiastical tone of the letters and the preoccupation with details of administration and office are not quite what we anticipate in Paul. The heresy attacked is not necessarily post-Pauline, but the warning to his trusted followers to keep clear of such teaching is somewhat unnatural, as is the solemn assurance he gives them of his apostleship. The insistence on the wholesome teaching, and especially the un-Pauline use of the term 'faith' in a sense that can hardly be distinguished from orthodoxy, are also rather suspicious. The style especially creates an almost insuperable obstacle to my own acceptance of their authenticity. It is very different from what we find elsewhere in Paul, and I do not see how the difference can be explained away. Nevertheless I do not agree with those who condemn the Pastoral Epistles as entirely spurious. I believe that large sections of 2 Timothy and not a little of Titus may be regarded as authentic. Even in 1 Timothy, which is the least Pauline of the three, some Pauline materials may not improbably be contained. It seems to me likely that the Pastoral Epistles have grown up around this Pauline nucleus by a process of expansion in order to fit them more fully for use as ecclesiastical

manuals. No objection was probably felt to such a process. It is not with forgery that we have to deal, but with what would seem legitimate application of the Apostle's own principles to new conditions. This type of letter, dealing largely with Church organization, lent itself readily to expansion, and probably some of Paul's notes to his fellow-workers were expanded by later writers into the Epistles as we now have them.

Passing now from the Pauline Epistles I turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is very strange that this should ever have been regarded as an Epistle of Paul. It makes no claim to this character in the oldest form of the title. In the early Church Barnabas, Clement of Rome, and Luke were named as well as Paul. Clement may be set aside on the sufficient ground of marked inferiority in intellectual power, to say nothing of style. Luke was a Gentile, and the author of the Epistle was surely a Jew. Paul may be set aside with confidence. The style, the plan of the letter, the handling of Scripture, the method of argument, the theological standpoint entirely differ. Any one of these taken by itself would create grave suspicions, some seem to me to be quite incompatible with Pauline authorship; taken together the cumulative evidence is irresistible.

Barnabas has in his favour that he is mentioned by Tertullian without any sign of misgiving. His authorship has been favoured by several scholars, and if the Epistle was sent to Jerusalem, no more likely member of the Pauline circle could be named as its author. That it was sent to Jerusalem, however, seems to me highly improbable; it is much more likely that it was sent to a congregation of Jewish Christians in Rome. Luther was apparently the first to suggest Apollos as the author, and this conjecture has met with very wide acceptance. Apollos answers very well to many of the

conditions. The Alexandrian character of the theology and mode of argument would be natural in an Alexandrian Jew, while the Epistle is such as we should expect from an eloquent man who was mighty in the Scriptures. We have no evidence for Apollos's connexion with Rome, and this rather favours the suggestion of Harnack that the letter was written by Priscilla and Aquila, who were the teachers of Apollos and belonged to a house Church in Rome. Another suggestion is that it was written by Silas.

Silas is named in 1 Peter as the writer of that letter. By this it is probably intended that he acted as Peter's secretary. Several scholars have denied Peter's authorship of the Epistle. It is thought unlikely that one of the primitive apostles should betray so little influence from Christ's teaching and so much from the teaching of Paul. We must not forget, however, that the fact of Christ's death completely changed the perspective of the apostles, and shifted the emphasis from the teaching of Jesus to His Person and Work. Before the conversion of Paul the apostles were already proclaiming that Jesus died for our sins. It was therefore not unfitting, even for an immediate follower of Jesus, when he was writing to comfort Churches under persecution, to give prominence to the sufferings of his Master and draw upon the exposition of their significance which had been furnished by Paul (see pp. 354 f.)." It has also been urged that the relation between Christianity and the Roman Empire was such as was not reached till long after Peter's death. But very eminent authorities on Roman History have held that, even before the death of Peter, the profession of Christianity was itself regarded as criminal by the Roman Empire. There seems accordingly to be no conclusive reason for setting aside the claim to Petrine authorship which the Epistle makes.

We have another Epistle which professes to be by Peter, but by the judgment of the great majority of critics, both conservative and advanced, the claim is disallowed. The chief exceptions are Zahn, Spitta, and Bigg. The grounds on which scholars have reached their conclusions are first of all the extraordinarily late and doubtful character of the external evidence in the early Church ; the reference to the age of the Fathers—that is, the apostles—and to their having long ago fallen asleep ; the disbelief in the Second Coming ; the allusion to the Epistles of Paul as already canonical Scripture which had been considerably misinterpreted ; the very marked difference in style and vocabulary from the first Epistle; and the incorporation of almost the whole of Jude's Epistle. On the latter Epistle I must not linger. Whether it was written by Jude, the Lord's brother, or, as seems more likely, at a later time by some other Jude we cannot say.

The Epistle of James presents one of the most perplexing problems in the New Testament. Many scholars consider it to be the earliest New Testament writing, others place it among the latest, while some occupy an intermediate position. It has been commonly assigned to James, the brother of the Lord. There is much that favours this supposition. Its Jewish character is very marked, so much so that some have even imagined that it was originally a Jewish writing which by very slight interpolations has been made into a Christian one. This is most improbable, since the Christian editor would not have stopped short with so slight a revision, and the echoes of the Sermon on the Mount cannot easily be explained as Jewish in their origin.

Its early date is supposed to be guaranteed by the

rudimentary character of the theology; the reference to the synagogue as the readers' meeting-place; the attitude to the rich; the legalist conception of the Gospel. On the other side the address to the Christians of the Dispersion; the general situation presupposed; the absence of reference to the points at issue between Christians and Jews; the section on justification which seems to be directed against the misuse of the Pauline doctrine; the very late external attestation—these arguments seem to me to suggest a post-apostolic date. It would be easier to accept an early date and the authorship by James if we could adopt the interesting theory of Dr. J. H. Moulton that the Epistle was originally addressed not to Christians but to Jews.

The Apocalypse has been for so long the cherished domain of faddists that the ordinary Christian has been tempted to renounce any attempt at understanding its mysteries. He has listened with amusement and incredulity to the makers of prophetic almanacs, distrustful alike of their principles and their results, in memory of the discomfiture which has so often been the lot of their predecessors. But leaving aside the strange vagaries of the prophetic school, the question arises whether we can break the seals which are placed upon the book. It is well within my own memory when it was thought by many scholars that the book had yielded up its secret and scholars had successfully solved the riddle. The book, it was supposed, was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem and depicted the conflict between the Church and the Roman Empire. It was read in the light of other Apocalypses and of the contemporary situation.

But rather more than twenty-five years ago a new method was applied. It was thought that the book was not a literary unity but had been put together out of

earlier documents. This analytic theory assumed several different forms, but it was commonly believed by the authors of documentary theories that Jewish as well as Christian authorship could be traced in the work. This, again, gave way to another phase, which we owe especially to Gunkel. This scholar held that the Revelation incorporated a very ancient apocalyptic tradition which had originated in Babylonia, and that the incongruities which gave a colour to the documentary analysis were to be explained as having arisen in the very long process through which the apocalyptic tradition had passed. Similarly he dismissed most of the allusions to contemporary conditions. In spite of the profound impression which Gunkel made, some scholars, notably Pfleiderer and J. Weiss, have more recently argued for composite authorship.

My own conclusions on the subject I may briefly summarize as follows. I believe that we cannot understand the canonical Apocalypses, the Book of Daniel and the Book of the Revelation, while we isolate them from the non-canonical. There is a good deal of apocalyptic literature, such as the Book of Enoch or the Apocalypse of Baruch, which throws much light on them. Nor can we set aside the allusions to contemporary history. The older interpreters were right in the view that in its present form the Apocalypse was designed to strengthen and comfort the Church in its life and death struggle with the Roman Empire. But I believe it is also necessary to admit that the Apocalypse has incorporated older documentary material, some of which was originally Jewish and not Christian. At the same time the book is not a mere patchwork. It was an author and not a mere editor who put it together. But I also hold that Gunkel has rightly divined the employment in the book of an old apocalyptic tradition. In its pre-

sent form the work dates from the time of Domitian, as Irenæus said, but the marks of earlier date which led to its being placed before the destruction of Jerusalem are really there, only we must account for them on the view that they belong to earlier material which the author has included in the work.

It still remains to speak of the historical books, the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts, and the Gospel of John, with which the Epistles may be most conveniently taken. And here we approach the very citadel of faith. For if we have decided that we cannot dispense with history we naturally turn to the Gospels to see how far our historical beliefs can be warranted. We cannot calmly throw overboard the historical element in Christianity, and feel that the great thoughts which the New Testament contains, and the presentation of the ideal character in the Gospels will give us all that we need. Far from it; Christianity is not independent of the historical Jesus. If it is detached from Him it ceases to be Christianity in any true sense of the term, and we lose one of the most important guarantees for the truth of the ideas themselves. If it could be demonstrated that Jesus never lived, a blow would be struck at the very vitals of Christianity, and even a much less radical position might be fatal to the Church's faith in her Lord. And the Christian consciousness has not been slow to recognize this. However strongly negative criticism has assailed other portions of Scripture the Church has borne it with much more equanimity than an attack on the Gospel history. The mythical theory of Strauss created a far greater sensation among the general mass of Christians than the much deeper and stronger criticism of the Tübingen School. And the instinct was a sound one; it was felt that Strauss had struck at the heart.

But it is a great mistake to begin with the criticism of the Gospel history. The criticism of documents must precede the criticism of the history they contain. We must examine the character of our witnesses before we investigate the story they tell. Now the literary problem which is presented by the Synoptic Gospels is one of singular interest. If we put these Gospels side by side we find that they present us with very marked similarities and also with very striking differences. They agree very largely in their selection of narratives, in the order in which they tell them, and even in the phraseology which they employ. At the same time Matthew and Luke have much that is peculiar to each, and even in the sections common to two or three evangelists there is a constant divergence in phraseology.

Various theories have been formulated to account for these phenomena. A very popular explanation has been that our evangelists drew independently on an official oral tradition. This must, however, in my judgment, which coincides with that of the great majority of scholars, be set aside on what seem decisive grounds. We have first to observe that we have two sets of common matter to account for—the Triple Tradition found in all three of the Gospels and the Double Tradition found in Matthew and Luke. Which of these represents the official tradition? If both, why does Mark omit so much? And if one only, how are we to explain the origin of the other? Then how were the framers of the oral tradition guided in their choice of incidents? It is difficult to recognize in this respect a deliberate official selection. The order in which they appear is also fixed and the language is largely stereotyped, and, what is important, stereotyped in Greek, not, as we should have expected, in

Aramaic. It is also unlikely that, without the help of writing, the tradition should have been so accurately remembered by independent writers. It is difficult to believe that the slight touches which so often adorn the narrative should have held their ground in oral tradition to the extent that we see. We seem to have definite proof of the employment of a document in the words: 'Let him that readeth understand,' which occur both in Matt. xxiv. 15 and Mark xiii. 14.

Accordingly we must suppose that the coincidences should be accounted for by the employment of two common documents. Many theories have been devised to explain the facts, but the labours of a hundred years have established at any rate one conclusion, to the general satisfaction of the great majority of critics. This is to the effect that the Gospel of Mark or a document very much like it was used by the authors of the First and Third Gospels. This is proved by a variety of considerations. Matthew and Luke are independent up to the point where Mark's narrative begins; where Mark ends they diverge again. The order also substantiates the priority of Mark. When there is divergence of order Mark is practically always in the majority; Matthew and Luke do not agree with each other in opposition to Mark. If from the order we turn to the detailed study of the language the same conclusion results. When a detailed comparison is made it is found that the agreement in language between Matthew and Luke is much less than the agreement of Matthew with Mark or of Luke with Mark.

But how are we to account for the sections common to Matthew and Luke which are not found in Mark? It is generally supposed that these were derived from a second document, which used to be identified with the

collection of Logia or Sayings of Jesus which Papias tells us was compiled by Matthew. This document, however, is now very commonly referred to by the colourless symbol 'Q'—that is, the German Quelle, or source. It consists mainly of discourses. To what extent it contained narratives is still a moot question, especially whether it included the story of the Passion. In the judgment of most scholars it did not, though Dr. Burkitt argues that Luke derived his story of the Passion largely from it.

The problem of its date is also perplexing. For my own part I believe that it is simplest to suppose that the author of Mark was not acquainted with it, and that the author of 'Q' was not acquainted with Mark. It is therefore likely that the documents were not widely separated in time. It is, on the whole, probable that we should place both of the sources in the sixties of the first century. I see no valid reason to doubt that Mark was the author of the Second Gospel and that his Gospel embodied much in the preaching of Peter, though naturally it need not have been confined to this. And in spite of objections which have been urged I still think it most likely that Matthew was the author of 'Q,' and that we should identify this document with the Logia mentioned by Papias.

But this conclusion at once suggests a question touching the authorship of the book as it stands. Tradition affirms that Matthew wrote in Hebrew, by which Aramaic is probably intended. It is, therefore, a natural supposition that our First Gospel is a translation into Greek of Matthew's work. I believe, however, that we must set this aside. The fact that the style is not that of a translation, and the description of Matthew's work as Logia, are not favourable to the view that the writing of the Apostle was a Semitic

original of our First Gospel. What, however, is quite decisive on this point is the fact that the Greek Gospel of Mark has been employed by the writer. It is improbable that one of the twelve Apostles should in any case have drawn on a Gospel written by one who was not an eye-witness of the events. But the fact that the source from which he derived much of his material was in Greek, demonstrates that the first Gospel cannot be the translation of a Semitic original. We have accordingly to conclude that it bears Matthew's name, not because he wrote it but because his Logia was one of the main sources on which the writer drew.

It may be urged that the Gospel of Luke had just as much right to the name, since it also employed the Logia as well as Mark. But tradition consistently affirmed that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles, and obviously the Third Gospel was the work of the same author, so that there could be no question of describing that Gospel by the name of Matthew. This very ancient and uniform tradition has been greatly disputed in modern times. It was an axiom with the Tübingen School that the Acts of the Apostles was a late second-century production, written long after the conflicts of the Apostolic Age had died away and designed to suppress the recollection of these unfortunate incidents. This view is now pretty generally abandoned, and usually a much earlier date is assigned to the work.

It still remains the prevalent critical opinion that the Lucan authorship is to be denied. In Britain the traditional view has been generally maintained and British scholars have been much encouraged by the recent vigorous defence of it given by Harnack in his *Contributions to New Testament Introduction*. The

usual critical opinion has been that the relation of the Acts of the Apostles to Luke is similar to the relation in which the First Gospel stands to Matthew.

There are certain sections in the Acts in which the author uses the first person plural and thus gives himself out as present at the scenes which he is describing. These 'we-sections,' as they are commonly called, are said by many critics to have been derived from a work written by Luke and to have been incorporated by the author. It is a very serious objection to this that the author should have thus contrived to convey an impression which was untrue—namely, that he was himself present at these scenes. Schmiedel, in fact, goes so far as to say that the impression was intentional. It is very hard to believe, however, that the moral sensitiveness of the author was so blunt that he should have deliberately created the impression that his narrative rested on the authorship of one of Paul's companions, whereas it was in fact a second-century compilation.

But, in addition to this, the marked resemblance in the style between the we-sections and the rest of the Lucan writings is a strong argument in favour of the view that the whole is from a single pen. If against this it is urged that the we-sections have themselves been edited by the author, this is not only unlikely in itself, since such a revision would have had to be more drastic than is at all probable, but it conflicts with the fact that the first person plural is left untouched. Accordingly we may still accept the Lucan authorship with a considerable measure of confidence.

The date of the Third Gospel is a difficult problem. Since the Acts of the Apostles closes early in the sixties some have supposed that it was written then. But so

early a date for the Acts is very difficult to accept. We should have to place the Third Gospel earlier still, and this would take back Mark and 'Q' into the fifties at the latest, a date which conflicts with ancient tradition and is itself improbable. Moreover, at the time when Luke wrote, several other Gospel narratives were in circulation, and this appears to point to a pretty late period. I can find no probable date for the Third Gospel earlier than the seventies, but in view of the dependence on Josephus which has been asserted by some scholars, and which on the whole I am disposed to accept, I am rather inclined to place both the Gospel and the Acts towards the close of the first century, and, in view of the mutual independence of the First and Third Gospels which I believe to exist, I favour a similar date for the First Gospel, though I admit that it, as well as Luke, may quite well belong to the seventies.

The problem of the Fourth Gospel is even more hotly contested than that of the Synoptists. The traditional view is that it was written at Ephesus by the Apostle John towards the close of his life. There were isolated denials in antiquity, but on dogmatic rather than on critical grounds, and it was not till the nineteenth century that, with the publication of Bretschneider's *Probabilia*, the question was really raised in its modern form. In spite of the preference accorded to the Gospel by Schleiermacher and those who stood under his influence, such as Neander and Bleek, the opinion continually gained ground in Germany that the Gospel was not the work of the Apostle. A late second-century date was assigned to it by the Tübingen School, which saw in it the flower of the movement for unity that had brought together the two parties in the Church. And many of those who rejected the Tübingen formulæ still adhered to the

Tübingen view that the Gospel was neither apostolic nor historical.

It is true that the extravagantly late date to which the Tübingen criticism relegated it has been generally abandoned, and that criticism has brought it back to the opening years of the second century. But many of those who place it so early are equally convinced of its non-apostolic origin and its non-historical character. In one respect, indeed, they go against tradition in a point where the Tübingen School followed it. It has been the constant ecclesiastical tradition that the Apostle John died, at a very advanced age, a peaceful death in Ephesus after a prolonged ministry there.

Many now believe, on the basis of a statement attributed to Papias, that the Apostle did not leave Palestine but was martyred there by Jews. Schwartz, in fact, goes so far as to argue that he was put to death by Herod at the same time as James. The improbabilities of so early a death are overwhelming, but personally I do not believe that Papias made the statement attributed to him, since otherwise I fail to understand how the tradition of a peaceful death at Ephesus could have gained its practically universal currency.

Nor do I believe that criticism has successfully shaken the story of the Apostle's residence in Ephesus. Since Papias mentions a Presbyter John as well as the Apostle, many modern scholars believe that the John of Ephesus, the teacher of Polycarp, of whom Irenæus and others tell us, is to be identified with the Presbyter rather than the Apostle, and that it is to him that we are to attribute such genuine reminiscences as may have been incorporated in the Fourth Gospel. Some scholars are strongly of the opinion that it is the Presbyter rather than the Apostle who is intended by the

disciple whom Jesus loved. On all these points my own judgment, for reasons I have stated at length in my *Introduction*, still adheres to the traditional view. In other words, I believe that John of Ephesus was the son of Zebedee; that he died a natural death and was not martyred; that he is the source, directly or indirectly, of the tradition incorporated in the Fourth Gospel; and that he is to be identified with the beloved disciple.

The consideration of the internal evidence of authorship opens a very wide field. It is practically on all hands recognized that the author was a Jewish Christian; it is widely, though not so widely, admitted that he was a native of Palestine. The crucial question is whether he was an eye-witness. There is a considerable body of evidence which has been put forward to prove this claim for him. I cannot candidly believe that it is so decisive as many of its advocates assert. The case of Mark is sufficient to show that the phenomena which appear to attest authorship by an eye-witness may be compatible with second-hand rather than with first-hand evidence. What in my judgment favours direct authorship by an eye-witness is the assertion in John i. 14, 'we beheld his glory,' which, when taken in conjunction with the opening words of the First Epistle of John, seem to me most naturally interpreted of perception by the physical sense. In itself this does not demand apostolic authorship. But in view of the identification of the disciple whom Jesus loved with the Apostle John; in view of the all but unanimous tradition of antiquity; in view of the improbability that any one but an Apostle should have been present at so many scenes as are described; I still consider it the more probable opinion that the apostolic authorship should be maintained.

And yet it cannot be denied that there are very serious difficulties in the way. Among these I do not reckon the exalted doctrine of Christ's Person, which it is said no Apostle who had known Jesus could have accepted. Those of us who believe that the doctrine of Christ's Divinity is true, and was part of His own teaching about Himself, will find in the Johannine Christology no stumblingblock in the way of its apostolic authorship. But other difficulties are more serious. Especially there is the objection or whole series of objections based on a comparison of the Gospel with the Synoptists. The Synoptists place the activity of Jesus in Galilee till the last period of His ministry, John tells us of several visits to Judæa. The Synoptists require little more than a year for their narrative, John at least two years and a half. The Synoptists date the Last Supper and the Crucifixion a day later than the Fourth Gospel; they present the teaching of Jesus in a form entirely different from that given in the Fourth Gospel; and the contents of the teaching are as distinct as the form of their expression.

Into these difficulties it is, of course, impossible for me to enter in detail. I must content myself with some general observations. We must not lose sight of the fact that, so far as historical questions are concerned, the Synoptists are not three independent witnesses. Both Matthew and Luke depend on Mark, so that the question reduces itself to one between Mark and John rather than the Synoptists and John. In the next place the Synoptists themselves bear witness in several respects in favour of the Johannine account. They have preserved sayings or incidents which point to a much more intimate relation between Jesus and Jerusalem than their detailed narratives would suggest. So far as chronology goes, that in the

Synoptists is of the vaguest possible character. We should not be justified in forming any exact estimate from them as to the duration to be assigned to the ministry of Jesus. As to the date of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion there are many features in the Synoptic narrative itself which testify in favour of the Johannine date.

The question of the teaching is, I admit, more serious. The difference between the Johannine and Synoptic presentation has often been exaggerated, and inspection of the former reveals a large number of sayings embedded in the Johannine discourses which bear a stamp very similar to that in the Synoptists. Yet I am forced to admit that the discourses in the Fourth Gospel cannot be exact reports of what Jesus said. The selection of material and the peculiar Johannine phraseology in which it is conveyed must be assigned to the Evangelist rather than to Jesus Himself.

Yet even here over-statement is easy. Much of the material can hardly have been invented. Exception has often been taken to the accounts of the controversies between Jesus and the Jews. On this I refer to the quotation given on pp. 306 f. from a Jewish scholar who cannot be suspected of any undue partiality towards the New Testament. Mr. Israel Abrahams, in the *Cambridge Biblical Essays* after pointing out that the writings of recent Jewish critics have tended to confirm the Gospel picture of external Jewish life, and that the blame for discrepancy lies not with the New Testament originals but with their interpreters, calls special attention to 'the cumulative strength of the arguments adduced by Jewish writers favourable to the authenticity of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the circumstances under which they are reported to have been spoken.' In view of this judg-

ment it is not unreasonable to suppose that the substantial authenticity of the discourses may come to be widely recognized at no very distant date, and thus the most serious objection to the Johannine authorship will disappear.

On the question of the Johannine Epistles I must content myself with a few words. I see no valid reason to doubt that the First Epistle is by the author of the Fourth Gospel. The points of contact, both in phraseology and in thought, are too close to make it probable that we have to do with difference of authorship, especially as the external evidence decidedly points in the same direction. The case is somewhat different with the other Epistles. They, too, bear a Johannine stamp, but this can quite possibly be accounted for by the view that they emerge from the same school. The fact that the author describes himself as the Presbyter, combined with the ecclesiastical conditions presupposed in the third letter, perhaps favour the view that the author was the Presbyter rather than the Apostle. It would be easier to think of Diotrephes as opposing the Presbyter than one so universally revered in Christian communities and so authoritative as the Apostle. Fortunately the question is one of only trifling moment.

CHAPTER XIII

HISTORY AS A CHANNEL OF REVELATION

I HAVE now brought to an end my sketch of the movement through which Biblical criticism has passed and indicated my judgment as to the probable results. I am conscious that such a discussion is dry and tedious, yet the very character of the Bible has made it inevitable. For, as I have already indicated, a distinctive feature of Scripture is that revelation has come along a channel of history, and, wherever history is, criticism cannot be excluded. This is true both of literary and historical criticism. The former is imperative, because if we are to follow the great onward march of revelation, we must analyze our documents and arrange them in their chronological order. And historical criticism is necessary, for, once we have bound revelation and certain historical facts together, it is vital for us to inquire whether the facts happened or not. So far as the most important of these revealing and redemptive facts of our religion are concerned, I have argued for their historicity in *Christianity: Its Nature and Its Truth*. But, having summarized the conclusions which seem to me to have been reached in the literary criticism, I return to the relation between revelation and history, on which I dwelt in the chapter on 'The Legitimacy and Necessity of Biblical Criticism.'

In speaking of revelation as a process in history,

the point which I wish specially to emphasize is that the Bible is largely the direct outcome of national history and individual experience. This close connexion of the Divine self-manifestation with human history is probably the fact which it is most necessary to drive home. Many of the difficulties that are felt with reference to the Bible would vanish of themselves, many of the unwarranted expectations with which it is approached, or the illegitimate demands that are made upon it, would finally disappear, if this characteristic of Scripture, with all that it implies, were once grasped in all its length and breadth. I have already shown how greatly this differentiates the Bible from what we should have expected such a work to be. Instead of a manual of theology or a treatise on morals it gives us very much which seems irrelevant to the purpose of a revelation. But I am firmly convinced that it is in this close and intimate connexion with history that the value of the Bible as a record of revelation is largely to be sought. For revelation is not a mere communication of truths and principles. Had this been all, the Bible would certainly have been an entirely different book. But what we find in Scripture is the record of an intense activity of the living God in human life, and that is far more than the bare communication of abstract ideas. It is this which gives unity to the Bible, the steady direction of it towards a goal which could be reached only through a long and arduous upward movement. It is not the unity which comes from consistency in the teaching, for this cannot truthfully be claimed for the Bible. The unity is not so colourless and monotonous as that, it is compatible with a rich diversity and even with far-reaching differences. It is the unity of a definite journey towards a definite

goal in which the lower stages are gradually left behind.

The Old Testament, then, is the history of God's self-revelation through a chosen people. He works here, as often elsewhere, by the method of selection. Out of the whole human race He chooses a tiny people to be the instrument of His purpose and the vehicle of His self-communication. Why it was Israel rather than another people we are not told; but, since God exquisitely adapts His means to His ends, we may well believe that Israel had a natural genius for religion, which pre-eminently fitted it to fulfil the task assigned to it in the education of the world. It is a commonplace that while Greece was called of God to educate the world by the creation of great literature and glorious art and by philosophical speculation, and while it was the mission of Rome to drill the world in the great principles of law and order, Israel was selected to teach mankind religion. It was chosen, we may believe, in virtue of its supreme qualification for the task.

We are to think, then, of revelation as slowly emerging through a long historical process by which Israel was gradually trained to apprehend in ever-growing fulness the truth concerning the deep things of God. We can understand the full meaning of this Divine disclosure only as we follow the course of Israel's religion from its dawn to its meridian splendour. We can rightly measure the Divine influence which was at work within it only when we set it side by side with the religions of other peoples. I do not wish it to be imagined that I regard man's search for God as ever met by Him with indifference or rebuff; yet the religion of Israel displays His action in a wholly unique degree. I cannot, of course, trace in any detail the history of Israel's re-

ligion ; but those who care to see the lines on which I construct it may consult my little *Religion of Israel.* I must content myself with indicating the leading features of the story.

I call attention, in the first place, to the low level from which Israel began its ascent towards the heights it ultimately attained. It may seem to some a degradation to say that the religion grew out of Semitic paganism. It is no degradation to the missionary to associate with the thief, the murderer, the cannibal, the man steeped to the lips in the foulest vice. He is no Pharisee holding his robes tightly about him lest they be profaned by the touch of the unclean. He is in his measure the friend of sinners, careless whether he is soiled by their contact if he may but win them to a sweeter and higher life. Our Lord outraged the religious conventions of His time by consorting with the outcasts, for He was sent to seek and save the lost, to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance. So God did not shrink from taking Israel very low down, but little removed from heathenism. Its religion was certainly affiliated to the common Semitic institutions and beliefs, just as Judaism grew out of the earlier Hebrew religion, and Christianity out of Judaism. There are many things, especially in Hebrew ritual, which can be explained only in this way. Indeed we must go further back, since it is only in the religion and customs of savage peoples that we find a clue to the meaning of many details in the religious rites of Israel. No new religion which has really lived has ever made a completely fresh start ; it is linked by many a tie to anterior beliefs and rites. And so far from deploring this or flinching from the fullest recognition of it, we have everything to gain by emphasizing the pagan antecedents of Israel's religion.

Nor does this diminish the reverence with which we stand before the complete product as it exists in the Old Testament. We measure the height attained by the depth from which the movement started. We realize how tremendous must have been the power of a religion, which could take up and transform materials so unpromising into the finest and mightiest creation that pre-Christian religion ever achieved. It attests the action of a Divine power which alone was adequate to a task so great. If we put the question, Why did the religion of this people alone scale those dazzling and dizzy heights, while the religions of kindred peoples remained in stagnant indolence in the valley below? the only answer can be that the Spirit of God was at work in it to an altogether unparalleled degree.

Israel was a very young people. So far from originating after only a comparatively brief period had elapsed since the world and its history made a fresh start with Noah and his sons, we are now aware that thousands of years before the birth of Israel great empires had risen possessed of an advanced civilization. It was inevitable that Israel's debt to them should be incalculable. The Hebrews inherited the arts and crafts, the organization of society, principles of law and justice, an ethic which was by no means rudimentary, and not a little religion, especially on the ritual side. The sacrificial system, the rite of circumcision, ideas and regulations as to cleanness and uncleanness, are illustrations of their debt in this respect. But the important thing for us to notice is not the features which they have in common with earlier or contemporary peoples but those that differentiate them from all others. Israel made no contribution to the world which deserves mention save its religion and the literature created by it. But this contribution was the greatest that any

people made. In the strict sense of the term the religion of Israel came into existence after the Exodus from Egypt. But it was not then for the first time that the people and its God came together. The earlier history is no doubt very obscure. Yet the representation that Moses appealed to the Hebrews in the name of the God of their fathers may probably be accepted; and if we are right in supposing that the patriarchs were historical characters, then we may well believe that the story of the call of Abraham may mark the real origin of the religion. For our purpose it is needless to grope in the darkness which shrouds the earlier period; but coming to the time of Moses, itself by no means too clear, we may seek to discover in it some light on the qualities that gave its unique character to the religion of Israel. The feature which specially arrests attention is that the religion was based on a covenant between Yahweh and Israel. For the thought of antiquity a God and His people belonged to each other by the very nature of the case. It would not have occurred to any one to ask how it came to pass that Chemosh was the god of Moab. They were bound together by a natural tie and no one raised the question what created this bond. Now it is not to be denied that the Israelites themselves often practically declined to the same level in their conception of the relations they sustained to Yahweh. Yet theoretically it was probably always recognized that the relationship rested on no natural necessity but on Yahweh's free choice. It would not have occurred to a Hebrew that Chemosh could have any other people than Moab. But he was aware that Yahweh might have chosen another people than Israel, and even after the choice had been made might for adequate reason cast His people off and choose another nation. And as

Yahweh chose Israel, Israel also chose Yahweh; and this act of mutual choice was ratified by the Covenant rite. But a free choice of this kind, entered into by mutual consent, has a moral element in it. The bond which unites the contracting parties is ethical and not compulsory, and thus from the outset a moral direction is given to the religion. Yet this is by no means a complete account of the matter. We have to operate with three factors, the people, their God, and the relation between them. The last of these we have seen to be ethical. It is not easy for us to form a confident judgment on Israel's natural qualities, since it always had its higher religion to counteract the baser and lower elements within it. We are therefore left to probabilities. Since there is nothing arbitrary in God's action, the fact that He chose Israel suggests that He discerned qualities in that people which specially fitted it to be the instrument of His purpose. It was not unusual among ancient writers on inspiration to illustrate the relation of the Holy Spirit to the human vehicle by the relation between a musician and his instrument. But the musician does not select an instrument which is cracked and out of tune, he chooses one which will lend itself most perfectly to his purpose. And we may similarly believe that the Spirit selected the most pliable and sympathetic organs of inspiration. Accordingly we may reasonably conclude that Israel possessed a religious and moral genius which made it most appropriate for it to be the people of revelation.

Then we have the question as to Israel's God. The question, Was Yahweh a moral deity? will perhaps seem superfluous or even irreverent, since the God of the Old Testament is for us identical with the supreme God. From our modern point of view we must put the question rather differently and ask whether the

conception which the Hebrews had of Yahweh was moral from the first. Some scholars have argued that the ethical monotheism of Israel was the creation of the prophets and that if we go back to Moses the conception of God will not be found to differ considerably from that entertained by the surrounding peoples, Grave protests have been entered against this view by eminent scholars and it seems to me increasingly difficult for it to be maintained. It is hard to explain the ethical monotheism of the prophets unless there was a development, starting from the time of Moses, which led up to it. We must account for the prophets, and that so stupendous a phenomenon should suddenly have appeared in the eighth century like a bolt from the blue is most improbable. We must go back to the origin of the religion itself and find already present, even though it be in a rudimentary form, the qualities which differentiated the religion of Israel from the religion of all other peoples. And there we find a race gifted with a genius for religion and morality, its national existence established on an ethical foundation of free mutual choice of God and people, and a conception of God which even though it may not be described as ethical monotheism may fitly be named ethical monolatry. It is indeed a matter of comparative indifference whether Moses inculcated the speculative doctrine of the Divine Unity, but of vital importance that, whether there were other gods or no, Yahweh alone should receive the allegiance of His people. Moreover this God was a God who loved righteousness and hated iniquity and demanded from His people a conduct worthy of their lofty privilege.

But the revelation consisted in deed as well as speech. The mighty acts of deliverance which culminated in the Exodus, the Providence that watched

over the desert wanderings, the conquest of Canaan, were all to the pious Israelite manifestations of the character and the power of his God. The election of Israel, its lofty destiny, the righteousness of Yahweh, His manipulation of Nature and history to achieve His ends, were not mere articles of a creed communicated through God's inspired spokesman, they were facts visibly enacted in the sight of all the people. Thus Israel came to know as well as to hear about its God. But of course the people with all the genius for religion which slumbered in it, and for all its more elevated ethical standard, its higher thought of God, its consciousness of a peculiar relation to Him, was nevertheless but little removed from heathenism. Its leader was one of the colossal figures in universal history, and it took many centuries to work out into clear consciousness the ideals which inspired him and the principles which he affirmed. The new religion indeed seemed to make its way but slowly owing to the imperfections of those to whom it was entrusted. Again and again we observe how the mass of the nation stood on one side and the representatives of a loftier spirituality and a more exacting ethic on the other. The Old Testament also reveals a gradual narrowing of the elect people. Of Abraham's sons Isaac is chosen and Ishmael is rejected, of Isaac's sons Jacob alone receives the blessing and the birthright. The Northern Kingdom falls in the eighth century, and the Southern Kingdom alone is left. The Jews were themselves sifted by exile, which caused many to abandon their faith. But the beliefs were more and more purified from grosser elements, the standard of conduct was continually raised, a more refined spirituality, a warmer and more passionate piety was slowly developed. Thus Israel was trained, thus it

responded to the Spirit's impulse. And the Old Testament is the record of that education, it is largely the utterance of that response.

In the flame of an intense religious conviction Moses fused the clans of varied origin into a living whole, conscious of its own unity. The religion had made the nation. The union of religion with the national consciousness was a fact of immense importance. It conferred strength and prestige on the religion as the nation grew stronger, it stimulated the appeal of patriotism by adding the sanctions of religion. But ultimately it proved a fatal limitation. For religion cannot permanently be confined within such cramping boundaries. When men have come to recognize the Unity of God they are logically committed to the admission that all nations stand on the same level before Him. In this position the Jews could not acquiesce, they could not nobly rise above the cherished illusion that they were God's favourite people. This thought indeed limited the outlook of some who had attained the belief that their God was the God of other nations and that Israel had a mission to proclaim the true God to the world. We are therefore not surprised that when the time came for the barriers to be broken down and the Gentiles to be accorded the same position as the Jews, the Jews made the great refusal, they held fast their monopoly and the religious leadership of humanity passed into other hands.

The settlement in Canaan brought with it the disintegration of the nation into a number of largely independent units. And religion was exposed to an even more serious peril through the settlement in Palestine, which involved the adoption on a large scale of the agricultural mode of life and the worship of the Baalim, the givers of fruitfulness. The wild licence

which generally accompanies the cult of the powers of fertility cannot have left the morals of the people unstained; and when they came to think of Yahweh as the giver of fertility, it was not unnatural that He should be assimilated to the Baalim and the purity of His religion be compromised by the foul rites introduced into His worship. Yet Israel and its religion came through the ordeal, if by no means unscathed, yet on the whole triumphant. It succeeded in absorbing the Canaanites and maintaining the supremacy of Yahweh. The poor and narrow life of the nomads was enriched and widened by the culture of the vanquished, and even the religion itself received something more than defilement from the touch of Canaan.

What we commonly call the period of the Judges was marked by many conflicts with the surrounding peoples, in which now Israel and now its enemies gained the upper hand. The most desperate struggle was with the Philistines. It imperilled the very existence of the nation but it created the monarchy and gave rise to Hebrew prophecy. The former meant much for the cohesion of the people, the creation of a stable State, the increased prestige of the religion; the latter, while of course crude and rudimentary, yet initiated the movement which was destined to yield Israel's supreme contribution to religion. The great prophets were as I have said already not altogether innovators, they did not create for the first time in the world's history an ethical monolatry, though to them may belong the credit of sharpening practical monolatry into a theoretical monotheism. They only proclaimed in clearer language what had been implicit and to a certain extent explicit in the religion from the first. But they stood face to face with a nation which had largely forgotten what had been emphasized by its

earlier leaders. Yahweh had come to be regarded as a national deity in much the same way as other nations thought of their deity. The prescribed service must be rendered on the one hand and triumph over their enemies would be granted on the other. This tie of mutual obligation was sanctioned by the bond of a common interest. Yahweh could not destroy His people, for who then could render Him the sweet scent of sacrifice so dearly loved by Deity or utter His praise before men and exalt Him above all gods? The prophets assume that in their heart of hearts the people know better. In such a question as, 'Is it not so O house of Israel?' they imply that if their hearers are faithful to the light they already possess they will know that the prophetic message is correct. Yet while their thoughts were such as ought to have been familiar, they were expressed with a clearness and precision, a power and a passion which were altogether new. The greatest service they rendered lay in their combination of religion and morality as alike involved in the nation's relation to its God. Here the note was struck by Elijah who withstood Ahab to his face for the murder of Naboth with the same vehemence with which he denounced the worship of the Tyrian Baal as a virtual apostasy from Israel's jealous God. The emphasis with Amos lay upon morality rather than religion. Yet since it was God who set the standard of righteousness, it might be said that he looked upon justice and equity as the highest form of religion and denounced cruelty and oppression because it was so hateful to Yahweh. A theoretical monotheist he may or may not have been. But a man who was assured that Yahweh swayed for His own ends all the forces of Nature and held all peoples in the hollow of His hand, that He chose them with sovereign freedom

or cast them aside if they proved unworthy, certainly did not imagine that He divided the dominion of the world with any rival power. He believed in a Divine righteousness so unflinching that the Day of Yahweh, so eagerly desired by the people, would prove to be a day of unsparing judgment; that God would rather let His people be exterminated than suffer righteousness to be trampled under foot. And side by side with the stern Amos we have the more gracious figure of Hosea who through the tragedy that had broken up his home and wrecked his life learned to know the unfailing love of God, a love mirrored in his own heart in his inexhaustible patience, his readiness to forgive, his longing to reclaim. Then came the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the limiting of the people of revelation to the tinier Kingdom of Judah. Here worked Isaiah with his thought of the holiness of God and the intolerable uncleanness of His people; the solution of the problem, set by this collision, in his doctrine of the terrible judgment, from which only a remnant would survive to form a new nation, righteous and happy under the rule of the Messianic King. In his time it seemed as if the fate which had already overtaken the Northern would be the portion of the sister kingdom. But here in the most desperate crisis of the religion there came a deliverance from Sennacherib in which faith beheld with justice a manifest act of God. So far as we can see, the destruction of the Southern Kingdom would at that time have meant the ultimate dissolution of the religion. Here if anywhere in the history we can see God's arm made bare. Through the dark period of reaction under Manasseh, the representatives of spiritual religion were forced to prepare in secret for the victory of their cause. To their work we owe the

Deuteronomic Law and thus the Reformation carried through by Josiah on its basis. In a sense this might be spoken of as one of the most important turning points in the history of the religion. It made a written Law the rule of the people's life and worship and thus it became the first step towards the creation of the Old Testament Canon. By its centralization of the worship at Jerusalem and abolition of the local sanctuaries, it initiated a movement that was carried forward by Ezekiel and culminated in the Priestly Code which has dominated Judaism to this day.

In somewhat striking contrast, though not in fundamental antagonism to it, we see the greatest of all the prophets. He denounces with the same emphasis as his predecessors the sins of his people, but he is far more searching in his analysis of sin; he demands righteousness with the same inflexible strictness, but as in the case of sin he goes beneath the external act to the heart of the individual man. And thus in his doctrine of the New Covenant he transforms the conception of religion by making it a personal relationship with a personal God rather than primarily a relation between God and the whole people. The centre of gravity was thus transferred from the nation to the individual. Religion was interpreted as inward rather than external. It was thus detached essentially from the State with which it had from the first been organically united. And so religion, transcending its racial limitations, became implicitly universal, even though this inference was not actually drawn. Nor must we leave Jeremiah without remembering that of him pre-eminently it was true that his contribution was his personality, his character, his achievement, no less than his uttered word. He created a new type in which the Christian experience was largely anticipated.

The time had now come, however, when it was well for the religion to be divorced from the political organization, apart from which at an earlier time it could hardly have continued to exist. The State had to be destroyed and the people carried into exile, in order that the religion might be emancipated from its local limitations and set free from otherwise ineradicable abuses. Only in a maimed form could the cult continue in an unclean land. The worshippers of Yahweh whose faith had not been shattered by His apparent abandonment of His people and defeat by Babylon were therefore driven to a more inward form of worship. If all other lands than Palestine were profane, holy seasons were independent of locality and could be observed under every sky. Thus a new significance was accorded to the Sabbath, and it was natural that by a spontaneous impulse gatherings should be held in which prayer could be offered, mutual encouragement and counsel could be given, and the sacred writings of prophets and historians be read and expounded. In this way, in spite of the destruction of the nation the sense of racial identity was not lost, the people remained aware of their distinction from the heathen and the relation in which they stood to their God. Everything no doubt would be done to foster this consciousness of differentiation from other peoples and a maintenance of racial peculiarities. Those ceremonies which were independent of local conditions received a new emphasis, such as circumcision, the laws of uncleanness and purification and the Sabbath. The necessity of maintaining their religion in face of a splendid and impressive polytheism sharpened their monotheistic convictions. And the long absence from Palestine destroyed the links which bound the people to the local sanctuaries. But for

this decisive rupture with places and rites endeared to them by long association it would hardly have been possible for the reformed worship to have been heartily accepted. The fascination of the high places would have proved too strong.

It would be pressing Jeremiah's teaching too far if we imagined that he looked forward to a dematerialized religion. The inward spirit was no doubt all important, but it would naturally seek expression in a collective and therefore external form. Exile was only an episode in the nation's life, Yahweh would bring back His people to His land and theirs. Such had been Jeremiah's conviction, but the task of providing for a situation two generations distant he did not undertake. This was the achievement of Ezekiel. His ruling doctrine is the holiness, the sovereignty and the glory of Yahweh, and it is in the light of it that he forms his verdict on the history of Israel, predicts judgment and then restoration with equal certainty. He marks in the sharpest form the change introduced into prophecy by the Exile. He judged Israel's conduct with unparalleled severity and his message, like that of his predecessors, was one of doom. But when the State had been destroyed and the people were in captivity, he turned his face to the future and predicted a happy restoration. He emphasized the individual even more strongly than Jeremiah had done, though he threw the emphasis on individual responsibility rather than on personal religion. It is all the more striking that the community meant so much to him, and that he should have taken such pains to secure a religious organization for it. He thus became the father of Judaism, which was controlled by his principles and carried out his ideals more than those of any other man.

To the Second Isaiah we owe a doctrine, expressed with a sublime eloquence, of God as the Maker of the universe and the Lord of history, a God who, while incomparable in majesty, in wisdom and in power, cares for His people with far more than a mother's tenderness and love. To him we owe the thought that the election of Israel is for the sake of the world, that the nation is the Servant of Yahweh whose task it is to carry to the heathen the knowledge of the true God, whose calamities and exile are a vicarious endurance of suffering which the heathen had deserved.

The return of the Jews from exile made possible the rebuilding of the Temple and the establishment of the cultus on the lines laid down in Deuteronomy. Only at Jerusalem could the sacrificial system be carried on. But while in this way Yahweh's forgiveness was manifested and His complete worship was re-established, the forces which made for progress were still for the most part resident in Babylon. There the successors of Ezekiel carried on his work and by the compilation of the Priestly Code brought the Law to relative completion. The acceptance of it marked the birth of Judaism. Prophecy naturally dwindled in the atmosphere of legalism or was transformed more and more into apocalyptic. While the priesthood and the temple and the system of worship carried on there held the central place in the religion they were really less important for Judaism as a whole than the Law and the scribes who were its interpreters. The priests' function was restricted to Jerusalem, the scribe was ubiquitous. Yet Judaism was not simply a barren legalism. Of this the Psalter is our sufficient evidence. Nor yet was it so bitter and exclusive as it has sometimes been pictured, though only too much justifica-

tion is given for such a representation by many a page in the Old Testament. The Book of Jonah is an impassioned protest against the narrowness of the current Judaism and its vindictive longing for the destruction of the heathen world. The practical and speculative problems of religion and ethics were treated from different points of view in the Wisdom Literature. The hope of Judaism amid the persecutions which assailed it, is expressed in its Apocalyptic Literature, its despair in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

If then we ask as to the record of Israel's religion contained in the Old Testament we may summarize certain of its main features as follows: There is, to begin with, a doctrne of God to which no other pre-Christian religion presents any parallel. He was of course realized as the living God, intensely personal, far removed from the Absolute of the speculative philosopher. So far indeed, that at first He is presented to us in a very human way, limited by human imperfections, marred too often by a ruthless ferocity. But no goddess reigned by His side, so that the foul sexual licence, in which kindred peoples found a congenial expression for their religion, was hateful in His sight. He was from the outset regarded as a righteous Deity, the vindicator of justice and the defender of the oppressed. For Israel He stood as the sole object of worship, He was a jealous God who would tolerate no rival. With the teaching of the great prophets the cruder features were refined away and the earlier limitations transcended. Although metaphysic was alien to the Hebrew mind, a conception of God was reached in which metaphysical as well as ethical elements had their place. The eternity, the infinity, the spirituality of God are implied, though they are conveyed in popular language, not asserted in

the formulæ of the philosopher. But the emphasis is placed on His moral qualities, His holiness, His righteousness, revealed now in inflexible judgment and now in forgiving grace, His lovingkindness and His pity. He is the Creator of the universe whose forces are all at His disposal; He is the controller of history who overrules for His purpose the plans and achievements of the mightiest empires. Through all apparent defeat and inexplicable delay He is moving with serene confidence and sure directness to His long predestined goal. He waits till His time is ripe, while His foes thwart His designs and mock His weakness. But when He strikes, He strikes once and needs to strike no more. They that hate Him lick the dust, His servants are exalted and His Kingdom is set up on earth in power.

And as the conception of God was deepened and purified, morality and religion also gained in elevation, in inwardness and in purity. The character of God necessarily reacted on the human ideal, as the one was moralized so inevitably was the other. By many a stern lesson the people were taught that He who was of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity could endure it least of all in His own chosen people. The mass of the nation no doubt fell far below the ideal presented to them by their prophets and lawgivers; yet even they were conscious that a special standard was set before them, a feeling expressed in such a phrase as 'such things ought not to be done in Israel,' or the condemnation on those who 'had wrought folly in Israel.' And it is the ideal rather than the often squalid reality that for our purpose it is important to notice. Justice in the law courts, integrity in commercial relationships, equity as between employer and employed, generosity in the treatment of the de-

fenceless, the widow, the orphan, and the resident alien, humanity towards slaves, the repression of slander and falsehood, temperance, chastity, prudence, readiness to forgive injuries and to repay evil with good, these and other virtues were clearly taught the Israelite by precept and example. Not in the Decalogue with its too negative morality and its regard for rights which must not be invaded, but in some of the classical utterances of the prophets, now and again in the Psalms or in the Book of Proverbs, especially in such a great passage as Job's oath of self-vindication, we should seek for the loftiest expression of Old Testament ethics. Nor were the writers so absorbed in details that they could not rise to the expression of great principles. It is a Hebrew prophet who asks the question: 'What doth Yahweh require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?' It is a Hebrew lawgiver to whom we owe the great precept, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

And in religion as well as ethics a very lofty level was attained. At first religion was primarily a relationship between God and the nation, involving mutual obligations both of a religious and of a moral kind, on which it is unnecessary to dwell. But with Jeremiah the individual came to his own, and although the sense of the bond between Yahweh and Israel remained unimpaired, the consciousness that the individual might have his own relationship to God became more and more widely diffused, and found many an expression in the later literature. To walk with God in humility and in confidence; to be assured of His goodness and His love, though the dark experiences of life seemed to mock such a trust; to obey His law, not with punctilious and painful exactness but

with alacrity and joy; to make the moral ideal which was the expression of His will an integral part of the personality; to find in unbroken fellowship with Him life's perfect bliss; to mourn over sin with a passionate penitence; to long for cleansing and purity with an unquenchable desire; all this and more religion meant to the Old Testament saint.

Yet with all the great qualities which we find in the Old Testament, we must not forget its limitations. We ought not of course to lay any undue stress on the lower elements in the book, whether theologically crude or morally repellent, at least where these had been left behind. They are valuable as landmarks on Israel's upward way. Yet we must beware of the opposite danger, that of taking the Old Testament at its best, in those rare and outstanding passages where it approximates to Christianity, as if they gave us a just measure of its true character. And judging it with these cautions in our mind we cannot be blind to its limitations. It contains, especially in its later sections, a highly developed and clearly expressed monotheism. Yet it largely neutralized its own achievement by its special appropriation of God. The nations belonged to Yahweh no doubt, but Yahweh belonged to Israel; an attitude which found expression sometimes in the thought that while the Gentiles were ultimately to be brought into the Kingdom of God they were yet to be subservient to Israel, sometimes in lurid and exultant anticipations of the fiery judgment which was to come upon them. Again, one may rightly recognize a real advance in the centralization of the cultus at Jerusalem. The suppression of the high places eliminated many abuses at one stroke, and secured a far more effective supervision. Yet the limitation to locality was a mark of the imper-

fection of the religion. It was transcended when the words were uttered 'Neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father.' Further, the physical element was over-emphasized. Physical victims offered on material altars in a material structure by priests whose tenure of office was conferred by physical descent, these were the media through which the worshippers drew near to God and sought to cleanse their conscience from the guilt of sin. Similarly the ancient system of taboo had survived in the laws of clean and unclean, into which it is true some spiritual meaning might be put, but which were essentially irrational none the less. Food taboos, such as are familiar among savage peoples, are present in the legislation in considerable numbers and reduced to system. Physical states which were inevitable or accidental and to which no ethical quality attached were pronounced unclean and an elaborate ritual was enjoined for their purification. The ideal of religion, especially in Judaism, was legalistic, the relation between God and man was conceived as a matter of merit to be achieved by a man's own acts. Legalism led naturally to an unhealthy casuistry and often to a self-righteous temper. Nor had the Old Testament any assured doctrine of immortality in the higher sense of the term. The persistence of the human spirit after death was generally accepted, but we could hardly dignify this flickering consciousness, which just held on to existence, with the name of 'life' in any worthy sense of the term. We can trace in the Old Testament the beginnings of a higher belief. Sometimes this took the form of a doctrine of resurrection, the body being recalled from the grave and the shade from Sheol and the reunited personality living on earth in the Messianic period. Sometimes, however,

the conviction is expressed that death itself cannot destroy the fellowship of the saint with his God but that the disembodied spirit will within the veil enjoy a blessed immortality in His presence. But these loftier flights of faith are rare indeed; in the main we must say that the Old Testament stands at the lower level. It was, therefore, natural that the evidence of God's favour should be sought especially in material prosperity and length of days, and virtue be commended as the passport to their attainment. The truth expressed in Bacon's well-known aphorism that prosperity is the beatitude of the Old Testament and adversity the beatitude of the New very well expresses one of the limitations of the earlier literature.

But it may be said, Has the Old Testament not been left behind? Has it any significance for ourselves to-day? Our very conception of it as the history of a long development in which stage after stage was outgrown reminds us that even the highest stage it reached was outgrown at last. The Gospel came and superseded all that had gone before. To this question I shall return, but I cannot ignore the fact that the movement of which I have been speaking did not come to its close with the Old Testament. The supreme type of religion is the Gospel, and it is revealed to us not in the Old Testament but in the New.

We cannot, of course, forget that the preparation for Christianity was many-sided. The Gospel came, as was fitting, in the fulness of time, when many lines of progress converged to create the best conditions for the spread of the new religion. Many states and civilizations had been unified in the Roman Empire. The diffusion of Greek gave to the missionaries of the Cross a language in which they could preach their faith to the most varied races, and to its

theologians a flexible and subtle terminology exquisitely adapted to express the finest shades of meaning. The old religions had largely lost their hold, there was a breakdown of morality on a large scale. And this bankruptcy of the old world in faith and conduct prepared men to turn with eagerness to a Gospel which offered power to the broken will and healing to the broken heart. Yet it is not on these things that our mind chiefly dwells when we speak of the preparation for Christianity, but rather on the history of the religion of Israel. Here rather than in the Imperial system which furnished the conditions in which the Gospel might win its peaceful triumphs, or the creation by Greece of the moulds into which its thought might be cast, or even in the aching heart that longed for nothing so much as peace, we find the most important factor in the preparation for the new religion. Jesus knew Himself to be the final revelation of God, since He was the Son of God, standing in a relationship to Him unshared by angel or man. Yet, while He stood in lonely greatness above Moses and the Prophets, and set the Law aside without hesitation, He asserted His continuity with the old order, which He superseded by fulfilling it. We can as little deny His affinity to the Old Testament as we can deny His matchless originality.

And the religion which Jesus came to establish was the final revelation of God. It was a revelation given through teaching but even more through act. Its message was clothed in language of wholly new charm and beauty. Its doctrine of God was more tender and gracious and yet free from all touch of weakness or sentimentalism. Its ethical ideal was more searching and more inward, loftier in its demand, yet filled with a new sweetness and inspired by a warmer, humaner

spirit. A new worth was attributed to the individual, even the meanest was of untold value to God. But greater still than the revelation in utterance was the revelation in character and action. The unearthly purity of Christ's life, the freedom from all self-seeking, the radiant certainty of God, the love which shrank from no sacrifice that it might redeem from sin, brought home to men an intimate realization of the character of God with which no earlier revelation can be even remotely compared. And while in the life and death of Jesus the revelation of God attained its climax, He also revealed for the first time the human ideal. In His perfect character there were blended all the virtues and graces in exquisite proportion and mutual adjustment, and yet not as a mere disconnected series but fused into a perfect unity by the personality to which they belonged. Thus we may say that the Person of Jesus, His teaching and His character, His life and His death, constituted the supreme revelation of God. Here, as before, that revelation comes as a process in history, a process by which God unveiled to us His nature and His love till we were able to bear the splendour and estimate the worth of His loftiest self-manifestation. And as the Old Testament contains the story of the earlier stages in this process, so the Gospels embody the story of God's last and greatest utterance.

But it may be asked, Why, then, do we have the Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles? If the last word is uttered in the career of Jesus, what room is there for anything more? The answer to this it is not difficult to give, for the full significance of any historical figure is not to be gauged so long as we limit ourselves to the record of His life, and remain content with estimating His character, the work that

He did, the influence He exerted in His lifetime. There are many of whom it may be said that the impact of their personality on the world has been far greater after their death than during their life. And this was pre-eminently the case with Jesus. His work culminated in His death, which was the climax at once of the revelation He gave and the redemption He achieved. And especially where it is the question of founding a new religion, we cannot adequately appreciate the success or failure of the founder until we have observed the response which he has succeeded in eliciting. We must see the religion at work, judge it not simply as a speculative dogma, but watch it in actual practice. We must test it by the men it transforms, by the communities it creates and inspires. The full meaning of Jesus can be seen only in the effects which He creates. Hence the New Testament is not limited to the Gospels, it embraces also the Acts and the Epistles. For in some respects these make the meaning of Christ and His Work more clear to us than the Gospels themselves. Without them our means for reaching a true estimate of the Founder and His achievement would indeed be meagre. We might truthfully say that not the first century only, but all the centuries which have followed, make their contribution to our interpretation of Him. And doubtless the future will have its own gift to bring of fresh insight into His significance. There are races but little touched as yet by the Gospel, from which a new and illuminating exposition may be confidently expected. And so it may be asked, If the history of Christ's achievements, which is found in the Acts of the Apostles, is needed for our due appreciation of Him, and if the interpretation of His Person and Work contained in the Epistles are an indispensable guide to ourselves

in forming a right judgment, why should we not include also the history of His later action in the Church and all the deep and wide utterances on that exalted theme by the great theologians of Christendom ?

Such a question, perhaps, deserves a more detailed answer than I am able to give. But in a few words I may make my attitude clear. It is in the first place plain that we are not debarred from gaining the full benefit from the story of Christ's triumphs in many fields during the Christian centuries. They are a support to our faith and a stimulus to our toil. Nor is there anything to prevent our appropriating whatever the great saints and thinkers of the Church have uttered with reference to their Master. But a sacred book which has to be the treasured companion and guide of commonplace men and women, on whom rests the heavy burden of constant and exacting labour, must be comparatively brief. And it needs no words to show that if we were to extend the New Testament Canon to embrace the subsequent history of the Church, or even its more salient features, and the contributions to the interpretation of the Gospel made by later theologians, our sacred literature would soon become unmanageable in size. And this would have the very unfortunate effect either of discouraging large numbers from all attempt to assimilate it, or of placing a mass of inferior literature before them, and thus causing a neglect of the primary for the secondary and inferior portions. Obviously the line must be drawn somewhere, and looking at the matter broadly, it cannot have been drawn at a more fitting point than it has been. I have urged that the literature is the outcome of life, and it is the literature of the classical period of our religion

which we can most fitly regard as classical. It is noteworthy that while the Old Testament embraces a literature, the production of which extended over several centuries, the whole of the New Testament was probably produced within less than a hundred years. There is a reason for this difference, and for the fact that Scripture reached a definite close when it did. The Old Testament tells the story of a long-continued preparation, while the New Testament relates the story of God's supreme achievement. Jesus Christ was His final Word, and all that remained was that the narrative of His life and teaching, His death and resurrection should be told, and that their meaning should be unfolded, whether by direct exposition or through a narrative of His achievement in the creation and extension of the Church. At a very early period foreign elements streamed into the Church, later the Church itself was rent asunder. The Christian literature of the times that followed cannot be mentioned in the same breath for freshness or power, for expression or insight, with that in the New Testament. No one who passes from the New Testament to the non-canonical literature of the second century, will fail to observe the almost startling contrast between the two. Possibly the Church ultimately admitted too much into the New Testament, for some portions of the literature were long held in suspense, but few will be found to declare that she admitted too little. Whatever our conception of canonicity may be, and whatever we may consider it to involve, we must recognize that the New Testament contains the classical documents of our religion.

Thus far I have spoken of Scripture as the record of God's self-revelation through history, but this brings

me to another phase of the Bible to which it is most important that we should direct our attention—I mean the extent to which it was created by individual experience.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PART PLAYED BY EXPERIENCE IN THE CREATION OF SCRIPTURE

In my last chapter I sought to show how revelation was closely connected with history, how it was intimately bound up with the career of the chosen people. We miss altogether the great significance of the method God has chosen when we think of revelation as a mere communication of abstract truths. The Bible shows us how in the training of Israel God strikes into the stream of human affairs with a wholly new intensity and energy. The breath of the Spirit is indeed everywhere, though its soft and gentle movement may elude our dull powers of observation. But through the history of Israel it blows as a rushing, mighty wind, and only those who are blind to the effects it leaves in its train, or deaf to the thunder of its voice, can fail to mark with what unparalleled power it has swept through that history. The history as a whole is in truth inspired, when we look at it, that is to say, as an element in the development of our race. I am not forgetful of the degree to which the career of Israel was marred by ignoble features. But in this connexion these considerations may be neglected. What pre-eminently concerns the historian is to estimate the contribution which was made by any particular people to the progress of the world. And in universal history Israel may truly be called the people of revelation. That

over long periods the exceptional action of the Spirit seemed to be quiescent, and that from beginning to end the great mass of the people was largely unspiritual, ought not to deflect our judgment as to the significance of the part played by the nation.

But the recognition of this widespread indifference to the deepest things of the Spirit, which at all times characterized a large proportion of the people, only throws into brighter relief the achievement of those who were its spiritual leaders. As we look at the over-arching sky it is not the dark spaces which fasten on our attention, but the glittering points of light that shine all the more brightly for the deep blackness in which they are set. And so as we look at Israel our attention is concentrated on those brilliant luminaries in whom the Spirit glows with such radiant heat. And here it is my wish to emphasize the action of the same principle in the individual, which I have sought to exhibit in the nation. Just as the Spirit conveyed the truth He desired to teach the nation through the struggles and crises, the victories and defeats, the joys and sorrows of the people, so He acted also with the individual. And the great truth which I have now to emphasize and illustrate is the large part which experience has played in the creation of Scripture.

I am thinking especially of the way in which the message of a Biblical writer was learnt by him through his own experience. Unhappily it is only in a comparatively few cases that we find the action of this principle explicitly recognized. It is all too rarely that we are admitted into the secret places of the soul and suffered to trace the conditions which brought the truth to birth. If only more of the Biblical writers had revealed to us the storms and conflicts, the temptations and the triumphs, the rapture and the pain of

their spiritual life, we should probably have been able to enlarge greatly the sphere of our observation and have watched the Spirit at work disclosing to man the messages of God. But in certain cases where we know nothing of the author's inner emotions and thoughts, we can still with confidence infer something of his soul's history from what he has given to the world. Who, for example, could read the Book of Job, a book written, as one of its most penetrating interpreters has truly said, with the writer's heart's blood, and not learn something of the tragic story of his own spiritual conflict? Like his hero he must have known by bitter experience what it was to have the soul shaken to the very foundations by doubts as to the righteousness of God. He must have found it hard to maintain his faith as he contemplated all the misery of the world. And then he must have regained his footing, not because he had fought his way out to an answer which satisfied his intellect, but because he had been lifted above his problem into a mystical certainty of God. So too we may infer from many of the Psalms the experience through which the Spirit taught their authors the lesson He would have them reveal to the world.

But there are cases where we are in a more fortunate position, where the experience through which the revelation came has been divulged to us. I desire to speak of three types. We have first of all those instances where some great experience is the medium through which the chosen instrument of revelation learns the truths which he is to apply to the conditions of his time. But we have a profounder and more indirect type where the supreme conviction with which the Biblical writer is entrusted comes slowly to his consciousness, distilled drop by drop out

of his own experience. And the third type is that in which it is not the lesson learnt through the experience but the expression of that experience in its classical form. What I mean by these different types will become clear to us from the examples I shall choose to illustrate them.

As examples of the first type I select Isaiah and Ezekiel. To each of these the truth which dominated his whole career was conveyed in a vision. Isaiah stands at the entrance of the Temple when his eye is unsealed to receive his vision. Looking into the inmost shrine where the invisible presence of Yahweh was thought to be enthroned on the cherubim, he sees God exalted in majesty, while the skirts of His robe stream out of the innermost shrine and fill all the Temple. With wonderful reticence the prophet tells us nothing as to the Divine appearance. But we gain an even more powerful idea of it as it is reflected back to us from the demeanour of Isaiah and the attendant seraphim. For the latter veil their faces that they may not see Him and reverently conceal the lower part of their body from His gaze, while they are poised above Him ready for instant flight to accomplish His will. And while such is their attitude in His presence, by their unceasing antiphonal chant they proclaim God's holiness and God's glory. And as they sing, Isaiah feels the foundations of the threshold rock beneath his feet, while the smoke which fills the house is the reaction of Divine resentment against the man who has intruded in his uncleanness into His presence. As he listens to their song of holiness it finds an echo in his own breast. For the vision of God, that great and holy God on whom even those who stand always in His presence do not dare to look, has filled him with a wholly new sense of God's in-

finite purity. And as he feels the threshold rock beneath his feet, his whole heart throbs in unison with it. For he is shaken by a dread he has never known before. In the light of God's white purity he sees for the first time in all its horror the blackness of his own and of his nation's sin, which by his solidarity with his people he feels to be his own. His sense of impending ruin, aroused by the consciousness of his uncleanness, fills him with dismay, till the seraph touches his lips with the hot coal and his iniquity falls from him and his guilt is purged away. Now at last it is possible for God to speak, and for the man to hear His voice. Yet it is not to him that He speaks but to the attendant seraphim. He asks them whom He shall send as their messenger on some unnamed mission. But though Isaiah only overhears the call he discerns the challenge in it and feels that he may offer himself although he does not know what the task is to be. And God accepts him for His service warning him that his ministry will only harden his people and that the outcome will be a fearful desolation of the land.

It is the truth learned by Isaiah in this vision, which through a long forty years he was able to apply to the conditions of his time and the problems which they presented. The first truth was that of the holiness and majesty of God. The second was that of the uncleanness of His people. The third arose from the collision between these facts. Since a holy God could not permit Himself to be compromised by an unclean people, and since the people would not reform, judgment must overtake the impenitent nation. Whether then or only a little later he came to realize that a remnant would return to God and form the nucleus of a new and holy people we do not know. If with the Septuagint and several modern critics we omit the

words ' so the holy seed is the stock thereof,' the story of the vision does not contain his characteristic doctrine of the righteous remnant, but only an unrelieved picture of utter destruction. When the tree is felled, the stump is burned. Yet the doctrine of the remnant was embodied in the name of his son Shear-jashub, whose birth cannot have taken place much later than the vision. The name he gave his son expressed his conviction that a remnant would turn to God. And there were two elements, perhaps three, in the vision, which might have suggested it. These were that Zion could not be overthrown, since it was the earthly home of Yahweh, who had His fire in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem ; that as he had repented and been forgiven, so a few might follow his example, and share his pardon and cleansing ; and finally that the purpose of so mighty a God concerning Israel could not be ultimately frustrated by the complete extirpation of His chosen people.

It would be easy to trace the application of these principles in his ministry. The warning that this ministry would prove a failure did not exonerate him from the task of urging his people to reform. But his warnings fell on unheeding ears. He counsels the panic-stricken Ahaz not to purchase, at the price of accepting Assyria's suzerainty, relief from the temporary embarrassment caused by the invasion of Syria and Ephraim. But when Ahaz had taken the reckless plunge and the Jews chafed under the Assyrian yoke he bade them bear it patiently. For he came to see in Assyria the rod with which God would chastise His people, and therefore he saw that it would be broken by no human power. Yet he was sure that Zion could not be overthrown and that the destruction of Judah would not be complete, so in the darkest

hour he faced the might of Assyria without dismay, secure in his conviction that in the Day of the Lord He alone would be exalted and all earthly powers would be abased. The remnant that would turn to God would be a pure people from which a larger and happier Israel would spring. And this new holy people would naturally continue under the monarchical government. The king would be of the Davidic line, a great hero and warrior, who would pass to undisputed dominion through a crushing victory over his foes and would reign henceforth as the Prince of Peace. Isaiah's conception of the Messiah does not flow directly out of his vision. But he would take for granted the permanence of the Davidic monarchy, and the king who would reign over the redeemed and renewed people must correspond to his ideal of what a king would be.

Looked at from one point of view it might be argued that we have elements in the work of Isaiah which ill accord with his claim to be a vehicle of revelation. The catastrophe did not come precisely as he had anticipated, neither when it came did it leave the pious remnant to form the nucleus of a holy people over which the Messiah should reign. But since this difficulty has a wider application in the Old Testament it will be desirable to treat it at a later point. Meanwhile I call attention to the contribution which he actually made.

The doctrine of God's holiness and exaltation was, indeed, no new doctrine, but never before Isaiah's time had it been expressed with such power. And for this the experience in his vision was responsible. For it was not a doctrine which he drew at second hand from the theology of his day. It was a conviction burned into his soul in one intense moment of piercing spiritual insight. And thus his doctrine was original,

not in the sense that it was new but that the certainty of it had been conveyed to him by an experience at first hand. So, too, the uncleanness of his people had been proclaimed by his predecessors, and they also had drawn the inference that a holy God and an unclean people were too incompatible for the present relations to be continued. But here again the power with which Isaiah drove home his indictment was derived from the shock of the contrast he had realized in his vision between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of His people. Alike in his doctrine of God and in his ethical and social ideal what counted for most was the vision that came to him at the threshold of the Temple.

It was the lot of Ezekiel also to receive his fundamental doctrine in a vision of God. The vision differs in significant respects it is true from that of Isaiah, and the difference in the descriptions which are given also reflects the diversity of the men. Yet the aspects of the Divine nature which impress the two prophets are substantially identical. Ezekiel learns from his vision the sovereignty, the glory, the holiness of God. From this conception of God, applied to the history of his people and the conditions which confronted him in the circumstances of the time, the whole of his theology may be said to be deduced. On the one side he saw the unsullied holiness of God, the purity to which not only moral but ceremonial uncleanness was intolerable, the consideration for His own glory which animated all His action, the compassion which had prompted His choice of Israel, the loving care with which He had studied its prosperity. And on the other side he looked at the history of Israel, which stood out in unrelieved blackness against the white background of God's nature and God's grace. His

eye ranges down the whole history of the people from the period of its servitude in Egypt to his own day. And everywhere his verdict is the same. The grace of God is repaid by base ingratitude, the holiness of God is tarnished by His people's sin. His concern for His own glory is thwarted by Israel's misconduct, His sovereignty cannot achieve its due expression because of the inward conflict which Israel excites within Him. For He is confronted by a tormenting dilemma. His holiness would lead him to chastise Israel for its sin, to cast away the nation which has so stained His honour and defied His rule. But on the other hand if He allows this feeling to prevail He will be discredited among the heathen, who will ascribe the overthrow of Israel to His inability to save His own people. Hence in pity for His own Holy Name He had again and again forborne to smite the people which had justly deserved the sentence of national death. But the situation was all the time becoming more and more strained, the smouldering anger of God was rapidly approaching the point when it would burst into a devastating flame. The hour of judgment has all but struck, for Ezekiel the destruction of the State has become a prophetic certainty, based upon his conception of God derived from his experience.

But how was the dilemma to be solved? If God rewarded the sin of His people by well-merited punishment His action was exposed to the misconstruction of the heathen, the prospect of which had hitherto inclined Him to mercy. At once the heathen would say Where is now their God? National extinction would imply the downfall of the national Deity. But since God's action is, according to Ezekiel, controlled supremely by consideration for His own glory and

reputation, it is inevitable that He should make it plain to the world that Israel's downfall was due to its own transgression and not to the weakness of its God. Thus there grew out of his fundamental doctrine of God the certainty of Israel's restoration. By the triumphant reestablishment of Israel in its own land it would be made plain to all the world that not the weakness but the anger of its God was responsible for the exile. But was He to pass over the mocking taunts which the heathen had hurled against Him when His people were carried into captivity? Far from it, He would clear His fair fame from these reproaches by a signal vengeance on the scoffers. Thus the exile and the return from exile and the overthrow of Gog with his innumerable hordes, would all contribute to the vindication of His honour which Israel and the heathen had so besmirched.

But Ezekiel heard also the murmuring of his people against the equity of God's rule. Their fathers had sinned they said and they were paying the penalty. Confronted with this challenge to the Divine justice the prophet developed his doctrine of individual responsibility. 'Against the older doctrine which we find enshrined in the Decalogue that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children to the third and fourth generations, while God shows mercy to thousands who are connected with those who love Him, Ezekiel affirms in the most unshrinking terms that there can be no transference of merit or guilt, of reward or punishment. The soul that sinneth, he says, it shall die, it and no other in its place. The goodness of one man cannot avail for another, nor can any bear the responsibility for his brother's sin. The ways of God are rigorously just and each receives in accordance with his deeds.

Thus we see how point by point the whole of Ezekiel's elaborate theology grew out of his fundamental conception of God which he received in the vision that constituted his call. He, like Isaiah, illustrates the way in which a great spiritual truth, communicated to the prophet in the hour of his call, completely dominates his later activity and is the source from which the whole of his teaching is directly or indirectly drawn. I pass on to the second type and desire to illustrate the way in which an experience spread over a long period brought home to him who passed through it some new and precious revelation.

As my first example of this I take the tragic story of Hosea. I do not believe that those are right who see in it only an allegory. In various ways the allegorical interpretation breaks down so that we must find in this narrative, obscurely expressed and tingling with pain, the prophet's story of the tragedy which wrecked his home and broke his heart. The career of the faithless wife who at last deserted her husband and sank to lower and yet lower depths till she was about to be sold into slavery brought home to the prophet a new insight into the relations between Israel and her God. The sin of the woman reflected on a tiny scale a guilt yet more colossal, a tragedy more cruel. For Yahweh had won Israel for His bride in the purity of her springtime when He had gained her love by releasing her from bondage. There in the wilderness they had pledged their troth to each other and He had given her the fertile land of Canaan. But she had counted the corn and wine and oil of that fruitful domain as the gift of the Canaanite Baalim. And so she had gone after these false deities, forgetful of the allegiance she owed to Yahweh alone. It was therefore inevitable that punishment should follow in the

wake of sin. Lower and lower the guilty nation must sink till at last she is cast out of her land and driven back into the wilderness.

But is this to be the end of God's dealing with her? Is she to be utterly rejected and the marriage tie which bound her to her God completely dissolved. The prophet's heart supplies him with the answer, an answer already foreshadowed in his own action, as the sin of Israel had been mirrored in the infidelity of his wife. For when she had fallen into abject misery, and the loss of liberty was to follow the loss of honour and home and even the protection of her lovers, the injured husband stepped in and saved the profligate woman from the extreme consequences of her folly and her sin. He took her home, and though he could not restore her at once to her old position he secluded her from the unpitying world, sheltered her from destitution, and removing her from temptation gave her the opportunity to reform. And as he looked into his own heart and watched himself for the motives which prompted his conduct, he found that the mainspring of his action was an unquenchable love, which would not let him rest until he had reclaimed the offender, and which kept the fire of hope burning in his breast with a bright and steady flame. In him the noble saying of the Song of Songs, 'Many waters cannot quench love neither can the floods drown it,' received a wonderful vindication. He rose above the memory of all those weary years through which he had watched her declension from the path of honour, above all the agony which had wrung his heart as love was repaid by scorn and defiance, above all the accumulated evidence of the ineradicable corruption of her nature which the passing years had made all the time darker and heavier, and with a faith which would not die because it was rooted

in an inextinguishable love, believed that the way of return was still open and that she might climb once again to the heights from which she had fallen.

And as he reflected on his own experience and came to understand its meaning, he realized that he had in his hand the clue which led him into the secret place of the Most High. For if such was his attitude to his wife, if the long years of shame could not blot out the memory of the happy past, if bruised and buffeted by many a blow, love ever renewed its strength and met all its mishandling with free and sincere forgiveness, did not this throw a new light on God's relation to Israel? He also had passed through the same experience as His servant though on a vaster scale. For His love had rested on Israel in the fresh period of her youth when He had redeemed her from bondage and wooed and won her in the wilderness. And then the bride of Yahweh had been enticed from her loyalty by the fascination of Canaan. Will her God then fling her aside and choose another people for His own? Such had been the threat which Amos held out to the apostate people. But for Hosea, who had the deeper nature, who had passed through the fire and come out as fine gold, such a solution was wholly impossible. If a frail man could rise to such heights of forgiveness and could lavish on the unworthy a love so rich, what might one not expect Him to do who was God and not man? Yet Hosea in no wise relaxes the rigour of his moral standard. Just because God loves Israel with such intensity He is satisfied with nothing short of the highest. And to secure this end He will spare Israel no chastisement, however it may wring His own heart to inflict it. She must prove to the uttermost the weariness and cruel indifference of her lovers, must be cast away by those gods whom she had worshipped,

she must be driven out into the wilderness away from all the conditions which had proved such a snare to her. Thus having fathomed the abyss of misery she will look back with longing on the blissful past. Then as the prodigal said 'I will arise and go to my father,' so she will say 'I will go and return to my first husband for then was it better with me than now.' And then the love of Yahweh, which through all this long period had never wavered or grown less, would have achieved its desire and could receive unhindered expression. And in language of surpassing beauty the prophet paints for us the new blessedness which will crown their reconciliation. For Yahweh will lead back His people from the barren waste. He will bless her once again in her beauteous land, once again He will endow her with the corn, the wine, and the oil, once more they will dwell together in intimate affection and unclouded bliss. So the dark and sordid story moves to its radiant close in an idyllic peace, when she shall make answer as in the days of her youth, in the time of her unsoiled purity when Yahweh won her for His bride.

It will be clear to us that this conception of the love of God, which Hosea was the first to utter with such breadth and depth, in utterances of a quenchless affection and undying hope, among the loveliest and most thrilling in literature, was taught him directly by his own experience. He looked into his own heart, till it grew transparent, and it became a window through which he looked into the heart of God. And therefore he rightly read the meaning of it when he said that it was by Divine impulse that he took Gomer for his wife. For it was God Himself who had thus planned that the revelation should come, it was He who had kindled the fierce furnace in which this precious word of God was to be smelted out of the prophet's heart.

As a second example I select the case of Jeremiah. In his case more than in that of any other prophet we are taken into the secret of the prophetic consciousness, and gain, as nowhere else, a vivid idea of the imperious force with which the urgency of the Divine call made itself felt. It is not my purpose to speak concerning many aspects of the work of one whom we may truly account to be the greatest of Israel's prophets, all the more that I have already spoken of these in detail in my Commentary in the Century Bible. But in that which constitutes his main contribution to religious thought, the principle which I am expounding finds one of its most illustrious exemplifications. It was in his doctrine of the New Covenant that the teaching of Jeremiah achieved its worthy climax. He looked back as Hosea had done to the time when Israel had been redeemed from Egypt, 'I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.' It was then that Yahweh had made His Covenant with Israel, but His people had repaid His kindness with ingratitude and disobedience, they had trampled the Covenant underfoot and refused to fulfil its conditions. And yet Yahweh had been long-suffering and He had forborne to mete out to Israel the measure she had meted out to Him. But just as the conviction had been forced upon Hosea that Israel must be uprooted from Palestine since thus alone could she be freed from her entanglement with idolatry, so Jeremiah looked forward to the downfall of the Jewish State and the transplantation of the people to Babylon. But this would not be the end of Yahweh's dealings with Israel; the nation would be as those who pass through a dark tunnel, which leads from a cold Northern land, and emerge in the bright and sunny

South. So Israel would pass through this dark experience of exile and then return to its own loved country and to a happier destiny. For when Yahweh had thus turned the captivity of His people He would make a New Covenant with them, not as the Covenant He made with their fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. For that had been a Covenant inscribed on tables of stone, while the Ark was a material embodiment of the Divine presence. But now this external and material order of things would give place to one which was inward and spiritual. For God would no longer seek to control their conduct by a code of laws written on stones, but He would put His law in their inward parts and write it on their heart. In other words the impulse which would control conduct would be not only Divinely given but planted as an inward monitor in each man's breast. And yet we must not imagine that Jeremiah means no more than that the Divine will is imposed on the conscience as an external authority. He means that God's will is made an integral part of the man's own personality. It is not simply a higher power forcing its will upon a lower, the lower has accepted that will and made it part of itself.

And when we ask what this implies, it will be plain that it involves one of the greatest advances ever made in the history of religion. For while it is true that the Covenant is made with the nation it is fulfilled by the transformation of the individual. Religion thus ceases to be a relation between a nation and its God and it becomes a relation between the individual and God. It is no longer necessary for one to say to another, ' Know Yahweh,' since all will know Him from the least to the greatest. In other words each individual possesses through the Divine initiative an im-

mediate and mystical sense of God which supersedes the necessity of instruction by others. And thus Jeremiah's supreme doctrine constituted the most penetrating transformation which religion ever experienced, the religious unit ceased to be the nation and became the individual. He solved the problem of righteousness by placing all the emphasis on the heart, assured that if the centre was rightly fixed all else would fall into its proper place ; if man was rightly adjusted to God in his inmost soul a life wholly attuned to His will must follow as an inevitable consequence.

Such then was Jeremiah's doctrine of the New Covenant, the loftiest height reached by the religion of Israel. The New Testament in the identification it makes of Christianity with the New Covenant justifies us in this estimate. For Jesus the outpouring of His blood was the institution of the New Covenant. Paul takes up the language of Jeremiah, speaking of himself and his fellow-labourers as ' ministers of the New Covenant ' and contrasting ' the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones ' with the ministration of the Spirit, and affirming that his readers were ' an epistle of Christ,' ' written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone but in tables that are hearts of flesh.' And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews explicitly bases a large part of his argument on the same great passage. These facts justify us in the lofty place we assign to Jeremiah's greatest utterances, in which we may truly see an expression of Christianity before Christ.

And this makes all the more significant the question how it came to pass that Jeremiah rose to this lofty height. It was through his own experience that this great revelation came to him. From the beginning of his ministry we observe in him a wholly new pre-

occupation with the inner life. It is on the heart of man that his attention is concentrated. There is a firmness and delicacy, a penetration and analytic power in his psychological observation which have no parallel in any of his predecessors. But he is also eminent for his gift of introspection, for the way in which he probes his own motives and lays bare for us the interplay of his complex and tangled emotions. He was thus naturally predisposed to the view of religion which we specially associate with his name. The inner life of the individual meant so much more to him than it had meant to those who had gone before him. Yet this might not have sufficed to create the doctrine, had it not been for the bitter sorrows which his vocation brought upon him. It was his fate to set himself in unflinching opposition to the dearest convictions of his people. He was impelled by motives of the purest patriotism, controlled by the clearest foresight, to withstand its political policy. Thus he was forced to play the part of an apparent traitor to his country and watch with a breaking heart the optimism which lured the nation to take the blind plunge to destruction. He was condemned to a life of loneliness with no retreat in domestic happiness from the pitiless storm of scornful incredulity and fanatical hatred with which he was assailed. And his lot was all the more painful that he was so ill-fitted by nature to bear it. Timorous and gentle, he had to confront implacable hostility; sensitive and high-strung, wincing at the slightest touch of contempt, his soul was cut with the stinging lashes of mockery or bruised by ribald unbelief. He loved his people with the deepest and richest affection, yet he was compelled to utter the most unsparing denunciations of its sin, and predict with unfaltering certainty its imminent

ruin. When at the beginning of his ministry he timidly shrank from the responsibility of declaring God's message, he received the promise of God's unfailing support. But as time wore on and his people seemed deaf to his appeals, as the tide of hostility became more menacing, and his pain was harder to bear, he found his faith severely tried. He had spoken of God as the fountain of living waters, but he came at last to put the despairing question, 'Wilt thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail?'

And yet there was no one to whom he could take his troubles or before whom he could lay his perplexities, no one but God. From the strife of tongues, from the hostility of open foes or the more dangerous treachery of false friends, there was no way of escape for him save to God. And God seems to repulse him. He answers his complaint, his sharp cries of pain, his remonstrance for appointing him such a task with stern rebuke and the promise of still harder trials. 'If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how wilt thou contend with horses? and if in a land of peace thou fleest, then how wilt thou do in the jungle of Jordan?' He would gladly surrender his vocation, which brings him nothing but scorn and persecution; but God is stronger than he is and makes silence more intolerable to him than speech. For when he would fain suppress the message which he is commissioned to deliver, it burns like a raging fire in his bones and gives him no rest till he has discharged his task. And yet it is to God that he must betake himself, sternly though God may deal with his weakness. In His presence he is braced and strengthened, the defects of his nature are subdued. The intimate communion with

God to which he is thus driven becomes for him an experience which he cannot forego. And slowly there dawns upon him the great thought that this close personal fellowship with a personal God constitutes the inmost essence of religion. And so when he looks forward to the future in which the religious ideal will be perfectly realized, he anticipates a New Covenant of which the distinctive feature will be the intimate knowledge of God by each for himself and the writing on the heart of the inward law. Thus the large part played by experience in the creation of Scripture receives a splendid illustration in Jeremiah's greatest contribution to religion.

As a further illustration of the part played by experience in the creation of Scripture I take the case of the Apostle Paul. He illustrates a combination of the two types of which I have already spoken, though the latter predominates. For while it is true that it was in one great experience that the decisive change came, it is also true that what was most characteristic in his teaching was borne in upon him as the result of a long religious development. He was, of course, a child of his time, and many elements were built into the structure of his theology; but it is my conviction that for what was central and most characteristic in his teaching we must find a source in his own inward struggles and victory. His fundamental doctrines of sin, of the Law, and of salvation, bear everywhere the stamp of his own history. No doubt he derived not a little from the Old Testament. Indeed since this was the indispensable background of Christianity, apart from the Old Testament his theology could never have come into existence. But it is in my judgment a mistake to reduce the Pauline doctrine to the Old Testament

level. In the case of a doctrine so fundamental as that of the flesh the tragic depth and ethical intensity are much impoverished by this reduction. His doctrine of the Law as suggesting disobedience and stimulating the principle of sin into active revolt is far removed from the attitude of the Old Testament writers towards the Law, to whom the proposition that the Law was the strength of sin, that it was given for the sake of transgressions, and came in beside that the trespass might abound would have seemed bewildering and blasphemous. To the current Judaism of his time he was no doubt indebted at several points, but these belonged more to the outer rim of his theology than to what was nearer its heart. To Greek thought and the Mysteries he probably owed still less.[1] The influence of Jesus was of course very

[1] Several scholars think that Paul was deeply influenced by the Mysteries and attached an efficacy to sacraments which can only be described as magical. This will no doubt come as a surprise to those readers who see in Paul the great champion of characteristically Protestant positions ; but it is held by not a few German scholars, and not unrepresented among ourselves. It is too big a question to discuss here, but I should like to quote a couple of significant sentences from the fourth instalment of Harnack's " Beiträge." Speaking of Paul, he says : " Criticism, which is to-day more than ever inclined to make him into a Hellenist (so e.g. Reitzenstein), would do well to gain at the outset a more accurate knowledge of the Jew and the Christian Paul before it estimates the secondary elements which he took over from the Greek Mysteries. It would then see at once that these elements could have obtruded themselves on him only as uninvited guests, and that a deliberate acceptance is quite out of the question." Coming from one who holds no brief for conservative theology, and who ranks among the foremost authorities on Primitive Christianity, it may be hoped that such a verdict will do something to prevent too hasty an acceptance of positions which have yet to be made good.

great and Paul recognized the essential identity of his Gospel, at least in a certain sense, with that preached by those who were Apostles in Christ before him. Nevertheless the form which that Gospel assumed was original and it was the outcome of a great religious experience original in the highest degree.

He started with the death of his old life of innocence through consciousness of the Law which came with the dawn of moral discernment ; he woke to the inner conflict of the flesh and the mind, and realized in all its tragedy the awful bondage of sin. In those long years of struggle his conscience was quickened to the finest sensitiveness, and his moral feeling deepened in intensity. He knew by bitter experience what the Law could, and what it could not do ; he knew what it was to agonize for peace with God and find his utmost endeavours all in vain. He grew familiar with the guilefulness of sin, and the victorious tyranny of the flesh. And then, in one great moment he had learnt that the Crucified whom he had persecuted was God's Son, who had plucked him by a miracle of mercy from his old life of failure and sin, and given him righteousness and peace with God. He realized that his salvation had been due to no merits of his own, but to the abounding grace of God. And the inmost secret of that experience he felt to be this, that he was one with the Saviour who had loved and given Himself for him. As one with Him he was conscious that he was a new creature, that the old life of servitude to sin and the curse of the Law had passed away, and that all things had become new. Out of this experience of union with Christ grew the conviction that the Law was abolished. The Law had proved incapable of doing what Christ had done for him, and his grateful love forbade him to assign

any value to it. Nay more, he had discovered that in this Christ who lived within him, he had all that he needed for the highest life. And as one with Christ, he knew that he was righteous before God. Faith had been for him that act of personal and loving trust through which he had become united with Christ. And, therefore, he could speak of himself as justified by faith, or again as justified in Christ. And with the inward recognition of the Saviour who was revealed within him as the Son of God there was given his new doctrine of the Godhead.

It is thus clear how his own experience was the origin of his most fundamental doctrines. But it may also be shown how some other doctrines, at least, had indirectly the same origin. For when he had realized that so it was in his own experience, he was driven by an inward impulse to erect the personal into a universal principle. With the philosopher's passion for unity, he sought in the universal the key to the individual experience. Thus he created his doctrine of the two Adams, in whom the two stages of his religious life found their representatives and were embodied in two racial acts. It is true that this scarcely gives a complete account of his doctrine of the Person of Christ, but the enrichment which that received came, as I have already pointed out, from his own experience.

It will now I trust be clear that the most important factor in the creation of Paul's theology was the experience of sin and redemption through which he had passed. Through a series of years he had found his aspirations for righteousness defeated by sin which entrenched itself in the flesh and forced him into hostility with the Law of God. And then there had come to him the great revelation, which illumined

his darkness and lifted him out of his despair, that what he had sought through his own efforts and sought in vain was freely bestowed by God through faith in the grace which He had manifested in Christ. His theology is an interpretation of his experience and an elucidation of its significance for humanity at large. Thus we are taught once more how large is the part played by experience in the creation of the Bible.

So far I have spoken of the Bible as embodying the great doctrines which the writers learnt through their own experience, whether concentrated in one great moment of radiant vision, or stretching through years of pain which slowly brought to consciousness and expression profound spiritual truths. But I must not omit to point out how much the Bible contains which is less the lesson taught by experience than the expression of the experience itself. It is constantly the case that as we read it we meet with utterances in which the deepest and loftiest emotions of the human heart find expression. It is very unfortunate that the designation of the Bible as the Word of God, while emphasizing one very important side of the truth should have obscured an aspect hardly less important. For there is much in the Bible which is not God's word to man, though it belongs to what is most precious in Scripture. It is man's word to God, uttering his deepest feelings of praise and adoration, of penitence and longing for purity, the passionate desire for fellowship with Him or the rapturous joy which such communion brings. In one of his noblest passages Paul has spoken of the Spirit who helps our infirmities, pleading for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. But as I have pondered on some of these great words of man to God, I have

felt that we might almost dare to utter the paradox that the Spirit has expressed the inexpressible, rising above the inarticulate groaning into articulate and imperishable speech.

And it is in the great crises of spiritual history, in moments of the deepest emotion, when the fountains of the great deep within us are broken up, and the surging flood of feeling craves an outlet, and all its own words seem poor, that the soul turns instinctively to these classical utterances as the perfectly fit expression of all it feels. We make our own the great words which enshrine the thoughts and feeling that well up within us; here we realize that Scripture, as no other literature, has uttered the ideas and emotions which mean most to ourselves.

Thus when there has come to the spirit a true conception of its sin, and it understands in some measure the dark and ruinous mischief which its virulent poison works in human life, while the sense of its tragedy fills it with penitence, where can its passionate sorrow find an utterance more poignant than in the fifty-first Psalm, in the language of the broken and the contrite heart? And when shaken to its centre by grief and repentance for the past, it would utter the prayer for cleansing and a renewal of its purity, where better than in the same Psalm could it find the words which will utter its desire?

> 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.
> Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
> Make me to hear joy and gladness,
> That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
> Hide thy face from my sins,
> And blot out mine iniquities.
> Create in me a clean heart, O God;
> And renew a right spirit within me.'

Or when again, having passed, it may be, through some great disillusion, in which the foundations on which the life has rested seem all to have been shattered, and time and the world offer us no promise of stability, we have learnt the vanity of all earthly things, and from the creature turn to the Creator and find in God not simply our highest but our only good, where can such experience receive a more satisfying expression than in the wonderful close of the seventy-third Psalm?

> 'But I am continually with thee,
> Thou holdest my right hand,
> With thy counsel thou wilt guide me,
> And afterwards to glory thou wilt take me.
> Whom have I in heaven?
> And possessing thee I delight in nought upon earth;
> Though my flesh and my heart fail away,
> God is for ever the rock of my heart and my portion.'

But when the claim has been made good that revelation has largely come by the channel of human experience the question may well arise whether the Bible loses or gains by this. It might possibly be argued that the value of the revelation is impaired because it has passed through the human medium and thus taken into itself some element of human inperfection. No difficulty would be felt were it merely asserted that the treasure had come to us in earthen vessels, that the jewel was enshrined in a casket far less precious than itself. For no influence is exerted by one upon the other, the intrinsic value of the jewel suffers no deterioration from the meanness of the casket, nor is the worth of the casket enhanced by its association with the jewel.

But is it not otherwise, it may be said, with this view of Scripture? So long as the pure water of

life is conveyed by channels which do not communicate any of their properties to it, so long the Divine quality remains unimpaired. But if you once allow such an interaction of the Divine and human elements, as that which I have affirmed, does it not seem as if the Divine perfection of the revelation is contaminated and adulterated by the human admixture? The old view gave us a homogeneous Bible uttering everywhere the same doctrine. The various writers were but the organ of the Holy Spirit through whom His Divine speech streamed forth, taking neither content nor colour from their personality. The reader was thus in direct contact with the Divine mind uttered in Divinely chosen language with no room for misgiving as to the wholly Divine character of the literature. But if we allow that the human experience has contributed so much are we not in danger of losing our guarantee for the full Divinity of the literature? Can it be to us a revelation in the same sense as before?

We have to take things as they are, not as we would like them to be; and the phenomena of Scripture make plain the truth which I have been expounding. If we compare one Biblical writer with another we are at once struck with the differences that emerge. The patient examination of the writings by individual authors has shown us with the utmost clearness how far they are from presenting us with so colourless a uniformity of teaching. How different Paul is from John and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews from both! This fact makes it plain that, whatever scope we allow to the Spirit's inspiration, it was compatible with a wide diversity in the presentation of truth by individual writers. In itself this may not appear objectionable, since naturally no single individual might seem adequate to represent and express

every side of the Divine revelation. At the same time it must be pointed out that it is only the co-operation of the human factor which introduces a limitation of this kind. If the Biblical writer had been but the mechanical mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, there would have been no need for this large variety of human writers. The very fact, however, that there is this large variety, this far-reaching difference in presentation, is itself most significant, and we are not entitled to lose sight of it. It warns us to shake ourselves loose from a mechanical conception of revelation and replace it by one which is vital and dynamic.

And when all has been said touching the human element in Scripture do we lose anything by the frankest recognition of it? We lose, it may be said, in abstract correctness; it is no longer the pure white light which streams forth through the sacred page, but light which has passed to us through coloured glass. It has been tinted by the writer's environment, his training, and above all his own spiritual experience.

Now it may be granted that for some minds the pure white light is most congenial. Those who have keen speculative interests, who prize intellectual truth supremely, these will naturally prefer to have the light uncoloured and undistorted. But these are after all comparatively few, and the book which aspires to be the book of humanity has other and deeper needs to meet. We do not want in Scripture the whiteness and purity of the icicle; abstract accuracy in formal expression may leave the will untouched and the heart unmoved. White heat is better than white light, and if revelation has come to us sometimes in broken lights, if it is dimmed by tears or made more radiant by joy, it comes nearer to us than it

otherwise could have done. The rich and variegated hues are more attractive to us than the bare light in its cold beauty.[1]

The word which has been won for us through the clash of human interests, through the strife of human intellects, or has struggled into consciousness through the wrestlings and agony of human experience, comes to us with unrivalled claims to authenticity and unequalled power to constrain our hearts. For the divinest truth when it remains a speculative abstraction may satisfy the intellect, but will arouse no enthusiasm in the hearts of any save the few who are gifted with a passion for ideas. It must submit to incarnation, must clothe itself in human form, be born out of the throes of human need or human aspiration, that it may come to us not simply with the power to

[1] Compare the noble words of Martineau:

"Yes: the heavenly essence in the earthen jar, the ethereal perfume in the tainting medium, the everlasting truth in the fragile receptacle—this is just the combination which does not content the weakness and self-distrust of men. They want not the treasure only, but the casket too, to come from above, and be of the crystal of the sky; they are afraid of having the water of life spilled, like the rain, upon the meadows and trickle through the common mould to feed the roots of beauty and of good; and they would store it apart, and set it aloft, and secure for it a sacred enclosure to which common men may come for their supply" (*The Seat of Authority in Religion*, 2nd ed. p. 288).

"The higher agency could live on, only by entangling itself with the lower in every fibre, and making the joint harvest richer from the infusion of a purer sap. As the divine element does not suspend the human, the appearance of the human does not disprove the divine; everywhere in history, even in Christendom—their supreme product—their work is blended; like a single drama by two authors, or like the melody and harmony of the same piece" (Ibid., p. 290).

sway our intellects but with the glow that shall kindle our imagination and the beauty that shall enchain our hearts. What might otherwise have been gained in correctness would have been far more than lost in vitality and warm human interest. It is because Scripture is often so instinct with emotion begotten of experience that it casts so strange a spell upon us and stirs us to the inmost depths. The sublimities of the abstract may move us to wonder but they do not warm and comfort us. It is a human heart which throbs in the Bible and it is this which grips us with such unequalled power.

And while the limitation which this involves must be freely granted I would urge that it is more than made good by the assurance which experience gives us. As life goes on we are inclined more and more to throw weight on experience. Fine ideals are all very well, but the question becomes more and more important to us, Can we verify them in experience? Will they stand the strain of everyday life? Unless they satisfy this test we are disposed, even if we do not deny their correctness, to let them fall into the background and attach but little importance to them. If as we read a portion of Scripture we feel that the writer communicates something to us which has never passed through his own spirit, has never been tested in his own life, has never possessed and swayed him, then we feel that this lacks an important note of authenticity. If it be said that it verifies itself in the experience of others, I am far from denying the value of this; yet I must point out that there is always the suspicion possible that the experience has been artificially created by the knowledge of Scripture. But when we know that in the first instance it was created by experience, then it reaches us with

a stamp of genuineness, which if it does not conclusively guarantee its truth at least affords a strong presumption of it.

And let us have the faith to see the Divine element in the human experience. We do not eliminate it at any point in the process. For if the revelation in its pure ideal form came from God, yet the human media through which it passed, were none the less the creation of His hands. This has come out clearly enough in the instances I have quoted. If Isaiah sees God enthroned in majesty, if he hears the seraphim chanting the praises of the Divine Holiness, if a wholly new sense of sin possesses him, and if thus he learns the truths which are to control all his subsequent ministry, these great experiences are from first to last granted to him on the Divine initiative. So too it was with Ezekiel's vision which taught him that conception of God's glory and holiness which he was to apply to the history of the past, the conditions of the present, and the problems of the future.

But even in the second type of experience the same holds good. Hosea recognized that his marriage with Gomer was due to the Divine impulse and that God had Himself planned the tragic history which was to teach him so lofty a truth. The experience of Jeremiah was none of his seeking. At first he would put the prophetic office from him and later he complains of the intolerable lot it brings him. But God forces the office on His reluctant servant and will give him no relief or respite as he pursues his task. The prophet is bewildered and resentful, a cogent proof that a Higher Power was at work in his career. And as we look back on its outcome in his great doctrine of the New Covenant we realize more than ever the reality of the Divine factor in the revelation he

made. And similarly with Paul one might show how the experience even apart from the vision was of God's contriving, so that he might be fitted to understand the impotence of human nature to fulfil the Law of God and the liberation from guilt and enslavement effected in the death and resurrection of Christ.

The force of what I have been saying may be more adequately estimated if I return to the contrast I have already mentioned (pp. 106 f.) between the Bible and Systematic Theology. It is the fashion in some quarters to disparage Systematic Theology. With that fashion I have myself no sympathy. So long as we remain intellectually constituted as we are, we cannot be satisfied till we have reached an ordered and consistent presentation of Christian truth. It is of great value to the student of Divine things that he should accurately understand them, that he should correlate them into a harmonious system in which every part falls into its proper place, receives its true proportion and is adjusted aright to the other parts and to the great whole.[1] But we may indeed congratulate ourselves that the Bible is not a treatise on Systematic Theology.

We go, it may be, into a botanical museum, richly stored with plants, all duly arranged to exhibit the scientific classification, the relation of one species to another, the upward movement from simpler to more complex forms. We feel at every turn how great has been the labour expended and how valuable the material thus rendered accessible to all who seek an ordered conception of the vegetable kingdom. And such a botanical museum is what we find in Systematic Theology where the truths of the spiritual

[1] See Chap. XXI.

kingdom are exhibited to us, arranged and classified and expounded with scientific precision.

But we may, indeed, be glad, as I have said, that the Bible is no Systematic Theology. As we read it we are not in the botanical museum with its labelled specimens cut from the root and dried, dissected, and analysed, from which the vital force has long since departed and which appeal only to our scientific interest. But we have passed from the close atmosphere of the museum into the open air and we find ourselves in an enchanting country-side. Correctness and classification and proportion are all forgotten, but everywhere there is life, expressing itself in reckless profusion. The green and elastic turf is under our feet, the blue sky is above our head, the sun shines with unclouded brilliance and when we will we may turn with relief to the shadow of the trees, the music of waters is in our ears, the breath of heaven upon our cheeks, the glad song of the birds wakes an echo in our hearts. We wander hither and thither, not anxiously hurrying or fearful that we may miss our way, for literature has no better country than this to offer us and the loveliness enchants us whichever way we turn.

Such a treasured possession able to bestow at all times, if we are rightly receptive, such enjoyment upon us, is our sacred Book. And such it is because God in His wisdom has not followed the method we should naturally have expected Him to take. His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts. Where we should have expected a Systematic Theology He has given us His living Word, living none the less because human emotion and experience have played their part in its creation.

CHAPTER XV

REVELATION AND ITS RECORD

The very nature of God demands that if He is to be made manifest it must be by His own choice. Inscrutable in His inmost essence, He might have closely shrouded Himself in the impenetrable darkness, aware of all our thoughts and emotions, appointing our destiny and moving us like pawns at His will, yet all the while leaving us with no ray of light on the central mystery. But a God whose inmost being is love desires by the very necessity of His nature to communicate Himself to His creatures. He must disclose the fact that He is, and that He is concerned for their welfare; and He must seek to draw them into fellowship with Himself. Yet He will not force His revelation too insistently upon them, since He must draw out their own faculty of response, granting enough to stimulate but not enough to overwhelm. He gives that on which their own minds may work and as their spiritual vision grows more accustomed to increasing light, more and more of the veil can be withdrawn. Most naturally we should look for God to manifest Himself in the Universe. And in truth Nature attests His stupendous power and a skill far beyond our thoughts to grasp. It reveals a stern law of retribution against the transgressor, but it speaks with an ambiguous voice on the question which most nearly concerns us touching the goodness and the love of God. In History also we see on the

whole and in the long run the triumph of justice and the downfall of the oppressor. Yet we see too often how History as well as Nature is red in tooth and claw, the strong are triumphant, the weak trampled under foot. But in human nature we see the emergence of self-forgetting love, of readiness to sacrifice, not simply in obedience to a blind instinct, but clearly seeing, deliberately counting, and gladly accepting all the cost. The universal existence of religion also testifies to a nature made for God and thus to the nature of Him who formed a creature capable of communion with Him. Yet it is but a troubled and distorted reflection of God that we see in the mirror of man's religions. If God was to be known as He truly is and not as man darkly conceives Him to be, it was necessary that God Himself should take action; and He revealed Himself as we have seen through history and experience.

We can readily see great advantages gained by the choice of history as the medium through which revelation came. This slow method enabled God to give a natural, unforced manifestation of Himself, a gradual unfolding of His character, His demands, and His aims. His people learned to know Him through the deliverances He wrought for them or the penalties He exacted for their perversity, His inflexible righteousness, His unfailing grace, His imperious claim on their obedience, His plans for them and through them for the world. No doubt His essential nature, His relation to His people, His designs for them were also made plain by explicit declaration through the lips of prophet, of lawgiver, of sage, and of poet. Indeed we might say that the word and the act supplemented each other. For the act needs to be interpreted that its full significance may be laid bare, and the word must be filled, illustrated and guaranteed by action that it may be-

come a concrete living reality. A mere description is entirely inadequate. Better than good news about God is God Himself. That such a revelation should be slow lies in the nature of the case. It had to be communicated on the large scale of a national history stretching over many centuries. Yet it may be asked, Why so slow, and still more why so limited in the range of those to whom it was addressed? Ought not love to have moved more swiftly to its end and caught all nations in its universal embrace? It is to many a great difficulty that in a world so dark there should have been just this one centre of illumination, and that even in this selected area it should have burnt for long with such feeble and intermittent flame. But this lies largely in the nature of the case and is in line with what we learn from God's working elsewhere. He selects nations for this task or that, not because they are His favourite peoples but that through them all nations may be blessed. And revelation involves something more than the uttering of truth, it must secure the true understanding of it. Education is needed to train its recipient in appreciation and response, and this involves a long process. Love must be patient if it is to be thorough, slow if it is to succeed in being sure. What lends much of its force to the difficulty created by God's apparent slackness is the feeling, which it is to be trusted we have outgrown, that the eternal destiny of men is involved in their knowledge of the way of salvation. If it were indeed true that every tick of the clock registered the irretrievable doom of an immortal soul, then at all hazards one might say the revelation must not tarry, no soul could be left unwarned of the peril or uninformed as to the way of escape. But since it is quite incredible that God should thus deal with His creatures we need not allow ourselves to be influenced

by such an objection. He and they have eternity before them. He could therefore choose that method of revelation which best suited the end He desired to attain. And this was most adequately secured by the slow self-disclosure and self-communication to a selected people in its history and in particular to chosen spirits through their experience.

Now it is far from my purpose to deny that God manifested Himself through history and experience in other lands than Palestine and to other peoples than Israel. Yet with the fullest recognition of this, we may none the less claim that Israel was taken out from the nations for this purpose that it might be definitely trained by the Spirit to reveal the true God to the world. Other nations had other functions, for Israel this supreme function was reserved. Alike in the fact that it said greater, deeper, truer things about God and religion, and in that religion was in it a specially guided development with the Gospel in view all along as its climax, the choice was vindicated. In the case of other peoples we have not to do with quite the same connected continuous movement nor does it issue in the same result.

At this point then we raise the question of the relation in which revelation stands to the Bible. We have identified revelation so exclusively with the Bible that only with difficulty do we recognize that in the strict sense of the term revelation lies behind the Bible. In a sense we may say that it is only a secondary revelation which we have in Scripture ; and by this I do not mean simply that the written page is the transcript of something which had previously been in the mind of the writer. Obviously unless we think of the inditing of Scripture as a kind of automatic writing, in which the hand of the penman was used by

the Holy Spirit, without any participation of the writer's own consciousness or will, we must suppose that the author had thought of ideas and fashioned the expressions before he committed them to paper. And probably it would be generally agreed by defenders of the strictest doctrine that the Biblical writer was in full possession of his faculties and was conscious alike of the ideas and of the words, before he actually wrote them down. But my meaning is not that the written form is secondary in the sense that the thought and expression were in the mind before they were fixed in written form. We make a fundamental mistake if we imagine that revelation begins at the moment when the writer takes up his pen and that its action is intermitted when he lays it down. Far wider and deeper was it in reality. It took the whole history of the nation in its sweep. It began with the fashioning of a people to be the people of revelation. The selection and the training of this people, its religious development, the land in which it lived, the civilization by which it was influenced, the nations and tribes with which it came in contact, whether in conflict or in friendly intercourse, or under the direct guidance of God, shaped this instrument to His hand. It was within the national life that the Spirit was acting first of all, slowly fashioning the higher conception of God, training to a finer delicacy the spiritual and the moral sense. When as yet there was but little or no written record the work of revelation was proceeding, alike in the history of the nation as a whole, in its specific religious institutions, and in the consciences of elect spirits. To a certain extent we might say that the revelation was independent of writing altogether, but this would not be strictly true, inasmuch as what was written in one age determined to some extent the development which followed. But

leaving that modification aside it would have been quite conceivable that the revelation might have been carried through from beginning to end without recourse to writing at any point. In other words revelation does not necessarily imply a book religion.

Nevertheless it is obvious that if the revelation which is thus conveyed is to bless wider circles and later generations, it must not be left to oral transmission alone. Unless it is protected by a written record it is bound very soon to become corrupt and almost unrecognizable. For human memory is treacherous and it may make vital additions and omissions, or garble to some extent the sense of what is retained. Human intelligence is so limited that the meaning of the revelation might easily be largely missed. Even the testimony of the original witnesses is in the nature of the case exposed to the defects of incomplete and inaccurate observation, blurred memory, and lack of precision in statement due to imperfection in the faculty of expression. If then the original witnesses write their story it is still a story limited by their powers of careful observation, veracious memory and accurate expression. But if they fail to write and their story is reported by some one who has heard them, then we have to allow once more for partial observation, incomplete or mistaken recollection and an expression which may by no means do justice even to what has been faithfully remembered. But suppose there were no writing at all, then with every oral repetition we should have to reckon with the danger that the story would drift further and further from the facts. The malign influences would play upon the report, toning down here, exaggerating there, distorting the proportions, changing the emphasis, disturbing the order, mutilating the form, leaving out here, introducing a foreign element there, until quickly

the original message would be changed out of all recognition. We may of course talk slightingly of book religion, but it remains true that writing alone can guarantee us against the corrosive forces I have enumerated even where there is no failure in good faith. But we have to admit the possibility of deliberate alteration in a theological or ecclesiastical interest, the sharpening or invention of what was congenial, the blunting or suppression of what had ceased to prove acceptable.

Scripture accordingly fixes for us in a permanent form the record of the revelation and enables us to trace the process which gave it birth. By its means we can to no small extent put ourselves back into the condition of those to whom the revelation was made and apprehend its meaning more vividly and fully in the light of this knowledge. Prophecy as it was uttered was the fleeting word, spoken for the immediate need, striking, it might be, with tremendous impact on the listeners, bringing matters to an issue, forcing or resolving a crisis, creating an epoch in political or religious life. But it remained only in its effects, in which it was soon merged and lost. But when writing was called in as the supplement of speech, it caught and fixed for ever the otherwise transient utterance. Now for all time the relation of the prophetic word to the effects it created was made clear, and thus its eternal significance could be disengaged. Moreover in some instances we have to allow for the transformation occasioned by transplantation into a new environment. The very task of making the Gospel intelligible to men of a totally different culture involved some adaptation in the telling, but a still deeper change in the assimilation. It is therefore a matter for great thankfulness that the Gospel history became fixed in

writing to a large extent before it had been touched by the Greek spirit to any appreciable degree. Apart from the control of writing, the history would soon have passed over into a legend, assuming all manner of wild and fantastic shapes, expressing all kinds of extravagant or debased ideas. From an overgrowth so tangled one might have despaired of extricating the genuine Gospel. We need not concern ourselves with the taunt that ours is a book religion, if by this it is intended that the classical expression of our faith and the sources from which we have learnt the story of its origin and early history are permanently fixed for us in a literary form. True, the revelation might have been given through history and experience and never entrusted to writing at all; but apart from a perpetual miracle it is hard to see how it could have been protected from far-reaching and indeed vital misinterpretation. And what applies to any given section of Scripture applies similarly to the revelation as an organic whole. This will not seem to us a slight matter if once we have grasped the fact that it is only when so discerned that its full significance is to be understood. Scripture is a unity, not altogether in the sense in which this quality has often been claimed for it, but in the sense that it brings before us the history of a great connected movement which culminated in the Gospel. But for the written record the history of this movement, which it deeply concerns us to understand, would have been hidden from us.

It may be urged, however, that this is an unduly pessimistic estimate. It overrates, it will be said, the place of the Bible. It underrates the living witness of the Church, its vigilant custody of the sacred truth and the institutions through which that truth is conveyed and applied. In other words our case would not be so bad if the Bible were to go, provided we had the Church

as the continuous organ of the Holy Ghost, led by Him into all truth, continually testifying in its sacraments to the great redemptive facts and communicating through them its streams of redemptive energy. The issue here raised goes to the roots of the difference between Protestantism and the various types which claim the title of Catholicism. It is an issue which at this point I do not desire to discuss. One may value highly the collective testimony of the Church and yet recognize that with a divided Christendom such a testimony is inevitably maimed and uncertain. The institutions of the Church we may rightly prize, yet they expound the mysteries of the religion in a form which at the best is very general and patient of divergent interpretations. And history warns us how deeply corrupt, how sunk in sloth and ignorance a Church may become, which relies for its purity of faith or elevation of conduct on a sacramental system divorced from Scripture. The facts themselves and their true interpretation are presented to us with far greater certainty and fulness in Scripture than they can be in institutions. Moreover, as experience abundantly proves, Scripture is among the most valuable means of grace. For instruction in the truths of our religion, for the building up of Christian character, for warning and for discipline, for comfort and encouragement, for example and inspiration, the Bible stands incomparable. We must accordingly hold fast to the conclusion that it would have been an irreparable loss if the revelation had not been fixed in a written form.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PROBLEM OF HISTORICITY

Our emphasis on the historical character of revelation seems to involve us in a difficulty. For even the historical books are very unlike what we might naturally expect to find. It is not merely the difference between ancient and modern ways of writing history that makes them strange to us. The Hebrew writers are divided by a deep gulf from the ancient classical historians. It is far more difficult to write a satisfactory account of Hebrew than of Greek and Roman history on the basis of the literary sources alone, even when these have been carefully sifted by the most competent critics. And this first of all on account of their incompleteness. The history of Israel is the chosen sphere of Divine self-manifestation. We therefore approach the Old Testament with the anticipation that here at any rate great pains will have been taken to bring it clearly and completely before us. And yet how far it is from satisfying the tests which we have in our minds! We are surprised to observe how meagre is the account of events which to the scientific historian would be of the highest importance, while on the other hand incidents which to him would seem quite trivial are treated with great fulness of detail. Events of incalculable importance to the historical development of the nation may receive the barest mention, or may even be completely ignored. Even the critical events are often

left in deep obscurity. The New Testament attaches very much importance to Abraham in the history of the religion. He receives the promise which is fulfilled in Christ ; justified by faith in that promise he becomes the father of the faithful, the type of the believing Christian. He is the fountain-head whence is derived the people destined to be the channel through which God communicated His grace to the world. Yet how little we know about Abraham in some respects which to the historian would seem very vital. If we can trust the story of Chedorlaomer's expedition in Gen. xiv., Abraham was a contemporary of Amraphel, who is identified by several, though not by all authorities, with the famous Babylonian King, Hammurabi. But this synchronism itself creates serious difficulties, and notwithstanding all that has been said, the historical accuracy of the narrative is still exposed to the gravest suspicion (see pp. 177 f.). Accordingly in spite of the crucial importance assigned to Abraham in the world's religious history we cannot with any confidence place him in his true historical context. And the same thing may be said of the other patriarchs. From Abraham onwards, for example, they are brought into relation with Egypt, and yet owing to the indifference of the writers to precision we are largely in the dark as to the period when the Hebrew migration to Egypt took place. The same vagueness characterizes the story of Moses and the Exodus. As with Abraham, Jacob and Joseph, so here we simply read of the Pharaoh or of the King of Egypt with nothing to guide us as to the identification. The consequence is that the greatest uncertainty hangs over the chronology of the whole period. A large number of theories are still put forward as to the identity of the Pharaoh of the Oppression, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and the date when the Hebrews escaped from Egypt.

So far as I am able to judge, the safest view still appears to be that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression and his son Merenptah the Pharaoh of the Exodus. But it must be frankly admitted that scholars of the highest rank dissent from this view, though they differ considerably from each other. Great uncertainly hangs also over the sequel. The Covenant with Israel on which its religion was based was made at Horeb or Sinai. But where the scene should be placed has been the subject of long debate. Our estimate of the political conditions which the Hebrews found in Canaan, vitally important as they were for the history of the nation and its religion, depends on the view we form as to the date of the Exodus, and is therefore itself very uncertain. The description of the period of the Judges is such that no clear idea can be formed as to its duration, or how the various incidents are related to each other and to the whole. Even when we reach the period of the monarchy we are constantly beset by similar uncertainties and incompleteness. For the historian it is often the incidental remarks on foreign relationships which yield him the most valuable clues to the reconstruction of the history. Some of the reigns which must have meant most for the nation's development are passed over in a few verses, while whole chapters may be devoted to what seem but trivial anecdotes. For example, the reigns of Omri and Jeroboam II were momentous for the fortunes of the Northern Kingdom, yet they are dismissed by the writer of Kings in a few lines. In both cases the political conditions were important for the religious development. Omri not only brought to an end the feud with Judah, it is by no means unlikely that he contracted the alliance with Tyre which led to the setting up of Melkart, the Baal of Tyre, as Yahweh's companion in the allegiance of

Israel, with all the significance that attached to Elijah's ever memorable protest. And the reign of Jeroboam II was even more critical. The brilliant recovery of Israel from the calamitous war with Syria led to a period of national expansion unmatched since the time of Solomon, the recovery of all its lost territory with enormous increase in wealth and luxury at home. The political and economic conditions were the direct occasion which brought about the rise of the canonical prophets. Yet it is only by reference to these that we can adequately realize how important the period really was. And after the downfall of the Jewish State the history becomes still more incomplete. We know very little of the conditions which prevailed during the exile. After the return under Cyrus it is only at a very few points that the historians give us any light. We learn of the return itself and the re-erection of the temple. Then for about seventy years there is a blank, after which we read of Ezra's first visit. Then silence once more for a dozen years, and we learn of Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem and the introduction of the Law. At this point, more than four hundred years before the birth of Christ, the History of Israel, so far as the Old Testament directly records it, comes to an end. And yet these centuries were singularly important, for in them we have the training of the people by the discipline of the completed Law; the transformation of prophecy into Apocalypse; the downfall of Persia; the conquests of Alexander which changed the face of the world; the subtle penetration of Jewish life by the Greek spirit; the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to root out the Jewish religion; the Maccabean rising and all that followed it; the creation of the Judaism into which Jesus came. The epoch is one whose importance for the history of Israel's religion and for Christianity itself

it would not be easy to over-estimate ; yet the Hebrew Bible gives us scarcely any information about it.

And the Gospel history exhibits the same remarkable incompleteness when judged by our historical standards. Only in Luke is there any attempt to relate the life of Jesus to contemporary history. The practical omission from the story of the years which lay between His infancy and His baptism ought perhaps not to be emphasized in this connexion. But of the ministry itself how little we actually learn ! Even the main course of it is very obscure and still warmly debated. And then how scrappy the story is ! Long months at a time are a complete blank to us, we have simply a selection of incidents and discourses out of a very large number, the majority of which have been irretrievably lost to us. The length of the ministry is quite uncertain ; where and how it was spent we know only in a very fragmentary way ; the Synoptists at least have no chronology worth mentioning. They are careless about time and place, the anecdotes are introduced in the vaguest fashion with such phrases as ' in those days,' ' in a certain place,' ' on a certain mountain.' Very little is told us about the Apostles ; the evangelists have no special interest in them save as their relations to the central figure tend to set Him in a clearer light. But their interest even in Him is not that of a modern biographer, and for the answer to many questions on which he would have given us information we turn to the Gospels in vain. And we are struck by the same phenomena when we take up the Acts of the Apostles. Luke has more interest in chronology than most New Testament writers, but very important questions get no answer, and were it not for references to persons or events known to us from secular history we should be in much greater perplexity than we are. We have no

satisfactory answer to the question how long an interval elapsed between the death of Christ and the Conversion of Paul, and the date of neither event can be fixed with any certainty. Galilee had played a large part in the ministry of Christ but of the Galilean communities after His death we hear practically nothing. Even the history of the Jerusalem Church is told us merely in outlines and fragments, and in the latter part of the book only as it comes into connexion with the Pauline mission and the problems which it raised. Peter disappears suddenly from the scene and our interest is transferred to Paul. But even of him the account given is very incomplete as a perusal of his Epistles quickly shows. We should not know of the existence of his Epistles, we should not know many of the autobiographical details mentioned in the Epistles themselves. We should form a different view of the Judaistic controversy from that given us in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus in the strict sense we cannot speak of a life of Jesus or Paul. For a biography in the ordinary sense of the term the materials do not exist. Even an event so momentous for the history of Judaism and Christianity as the Destruction of Jerusalem is not recorded in the New Testament. Christ's predictions of it are included, but no mention of their fulfilment is made.

Were it a matter of incompleteness simply it would not be so grave. But our difficulties go much deeper than the omissions and touch the accuracy of what we are told in the Bible. And it can hardly be denied by impartial students that the historicity in many cases cannot be successfully maintained. Nor is it a question here of minutiæ and trivial detail. The early narratives of Genesis are regarded by most scholars as mythical or legendary in character. The more advanced

critics pass the same judgement on the patriarchal history. Even those who contend for the historicity of the patriarchs do so with large qualifications and reserves. For my own part I am convinced that the theory which sees in the patriarchal history a reflection of the later national or tribal history breaks down in application, and even less satisfactory are the attempts to regard the patriarchs as originally deities, or explain them by means of the astral mythology. Accordingly, while I think it probable that certain stories which are ostensibly personal are really tribal, I am constrained to believe that some at least of the patriarchs are historical figures. Yet this carries us only a little way towards the acceptance of the details. The double accounts of what are apparently the same events warn us at the threshold against too implicit a reliance on the narratives, and the chronological inconsistencies to which attention has been called in a previous chapter show us that we are not dealing with literal history. It is generally held that we are on firm historical ground when we affirm the Egyptian bondage of Israel, its Exodus under Moses, his creation of the nation on a religious basis. But much in the story would not be insisted on, and in particular the codes of laws would be regarded as for the most part later than his time. Nor is it readily to be believed that the just emancipated slaves who left Egypt in haste had the materials in their possession to make the splendid and costly tabernacle described in the Priestly Document. Similarly with the narratives in Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. Even those who consider them to be largely trustworthy will recognize not a little which cannot be strictly described as historical. A comparison of Chronicles with the older history leads to an even more unfavourable verdict. The Book of Esther is by

most scholars regarded either as a largely legendary story with a historical kernel or as throughout unhistorical with perhaps a mythical background.

There is no such agreement among critics on the question of the New Testament. The difficulty is felt most acutely with reference to the Fourth Gospel. It might seem at first sight as if here the question of historicity was largely bound up with that of authorship. If the Gospel is the work of an eye-witness, then, it might be argued, it comes to us with the fullest credentials and may be completely trusted as a record of actual facts. If we judge it to be the work of one who had no personal acquaintance with our Lord but was far removed in time and place from the original scene of the history, then we have not the same reasons for regarding it as a firstrate historical source. Indeed the negative verdict on its historical value has often been made the determining factor in the repudiation of apostolic authorship. But recently there has been a shifting in the centre of gravity. While not so long ago the chief alternatives were—The Gospel is the work of an eye-witness and therefore historical, and The Gospel is not historical and therefore cannot be the work of an eye-witness, the problem of authorship while still a burning one is now relegated by many to a subordinate place. It is felt to be less crucial than the question of historical value, so that whatever view we take of the secondary it would be possible to adopt a different view of the primary issue. Dr. Drummond, for example, argues strongly for the apostolic authorship but thinks that the Gospel neither is, nor was intended to be, a historical record. Thus the opinion we form on its value as a historical source depends to some extent on our judgment as to the character of the book.

Did the author mean us to understand him as writing

history or an interpretation of the life and teaching of Christ? The question is not altogether a new one. The Alexandrian theologians in the second and third centuries considered that the Gospel was not to be taken as at all points literal history, but as allegory. Clement of Alexandria contrasts the Synoptists with John, saying that the former exhibited the bodily things, while the latter, inspired by the Spirit, produced a spiritual Gospel, 'spiritual' bearing the sense of 'allegorical.' Origen stated this even more explicitly, affirming that where the writers could not combine the allegorical and the literal sense, they preferred the spiritual to the bodily, the genuine spiritual being often preserved, as one might say, in the bodily falsehood. Even so rigidly orthodox and conservative a writer as Epiphanius, noted for his hatred of heretics, said that most of the things uttered by John were spiritual things, the fleshly things had already been certified. Dr. Drummond points out how essentially different the ancient, and specifically the Jewish, view of history was from our own, and the question arises whether we are justified in imposing our modern view touching history on the New Testament Evangelist. Naturally, to ourselves the suggestion contained in the accounts of the Gospels by the ancient Christian Fathers is startling, not to say repellent. For us history means that the events took place exactly as they are described. Had we been present we should have seen the events and heard the words spoken just as they are recorded. If we could transport our modern inventions back to the first century, photography, the phonograph, and the cinematograph would have matched down to the most trivial detail the story as it stands recorded for us in the Fourth Gospel. That is the demand made by the twentieth-century reader, to which an inspired narra-

tive he says must conform. The question is, however, whether we have any right to insist that our notions of the proper way in which to write history were necessarily those that were followed by an evangelist writing about the close of the first century for an audience which was familiar with a wholly different conception of history. Our problem is not what would the writer have intended to convey by selecting such a mode of narration in our own time, but what did he mean to convey to those who understood history very differently from ourselves. In view, then, of ancient historical practice, in view also of the opinion widely entertained in the Early Church, in view further of certain features in the Fourth Gospel itself and its relation to the other Gospels, I think the question should be regarded as one for dispassionate inquiry rather than for dogmatic assertion. I say this all the more readily that my own view of the Gospel is different. I have recently dealt with the question in my *New Testament Introduction* (pp. 205–209), and expressed my belief that the allegorical interpretation cannot be accepted. That there is a great deal of symbolism in the Gospel I do not, of course, deny, but I believe that the author intended his statements to convey facts as well as truths. I think it ought to be granted, however, that this is one of the points on which opinions may legitimately differ, and that we should not denounce the opposite view as inconsistent with a recognition of the real inspiration of the book.

If it is correct to say that the Fourth Gospel is the Gospel of the Eternal we must not suppose that in his stress on timeless realities the mystic who has expounded them for us in this immortal work was indifferent to history or to the actual questions which confronted the Church in his own day. The latter were indeed his constant preoccupation. His book was written not simply with

an eye on the past which it describes but with an eye on the present whose problems he desired to solve. There were forces within and without the Churches which he had to attack. There were those whose adherence to the Gospel it was his desire to win. For example, the reports of controversies with the Jews, which seem to us so puzzling, were presumably included because the author had the Jewish attack on the Gospel to meet in the Church. The arguments which he refuted were those employed at the close of the first century. But it would be precarious to infer from this that the author simply carried back the contemporary controversy to the time of Jesus. Such arguments may well have been employed in the lifetime of Jesus.

It is well known that one of the great difficulties which has been urged against the Fourth Gospel has been the account it gives of the controversies between Jesus and the Jews. This has rested largely though not exclusively on the very different impression made by the Synoptic Gospels. Even in the other Gospels similar difficulties have been raised. It is therefore very remarkable to see how the subject presents itself to a Jewish scholar who is in a better position than most Christian scholars for appreciating the appropriateness and credibility of the Gospel story. I quote the following passage, which, coming from Mr. Israel Abrahams, deserves the most respectful consideration. 'One of the most remarkable facts about the writing of recent Jewish critics of the New Testament has been that they have tended on the whole to confirm the Gospel picture of external Jewish life, and where there is discrepancy these critics tend to prove that the blame lies not with the New Testament originals but with their interpreters. Dr. Güdemann, Dr. Büchler, Dr. Schechter, Dr. Chwolsohn, Dr. Marmorstein, have all shown that the

Talmud makes credible details which many Christian expositors have been rather inclined to dispute. Most remarkable of all has been the cumulative strength of the arguments adduced by Jewish writers favourable to the authenticity of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the circumstances under which they are reported to have been spoken. Much more may be expected in this direction, for Jewish scholars have only of late turned themselves to the close investigation of the New Testament.' [1]

This quotation is very significant since the objections to the historical accuracy of the Fourth Gospel have rested very largely on the difference between the discourses it contains and those reported in the Synoptic Gospels. I do not myself believe that the difference can be completely bridged. In particular the phraseology often bears the stamp of the evangelist and it is hard to convince oneself that the discourses were spoken in their present connected form by Jesus. Largely they are the composition of the writer, but with the inclusion of many utterances which had fallen from the Lord's own lips.

It is not only in the discourses that the divergence from the Synoptists makes itself felt. The representation of Christ's ministry differs very remarkably both in its general course and the scene on which it was mainly enacted. Matthew and Luke indeed scarcely come into consideration at this point, inasmuch as it is generally agreed that the representation of Mark lies at the basis of these Gospels. But Mark is itself very fragmentary, it possesses no chronology to speak of and it can by no means be taken for granted that it reproduces with any approach to accuracy the actual development of Christ's public career. Accordingly the fact

[1] *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 181.

that with Mark the main scene of our Lord's ministry is in Galilee should not necessarily be held to condemn as unhistorical the scheme which makes room for several visits to Jerusalem, nor should the Johannine representation of the duration of the ministry be discredited because from the Synoptists we should gather that it lasted a little over a year. At certain points indeed some of those who are very sceptical on the Johannine version of the history recognize that it is superior to the Synoptic and in particular this is the case with the date of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. Only we must not forget that in case the documents are at variance the rehabilitation of one would involve the setting aside of the other. For our estimate of Scripture the important point to observe is that even the central documents of our faith are at variance on questions of no little moment for the reconstruction of the Gospel history.

And this brings us to the question of the Synoptists. In view of the widespread feeling that here if anywhere we must look for trustworthy information, it becomes a matter of great moment to determine how far we may rely on the accuracy of the record. And it is undeniable that there is cause for disquiet. Once again the earliest Gospels are in the crucible. We have the difficulties which lie on the surface. The birth stories in Matthew and Luke differ very widely from each other and can scarcely, even by the exercise of exceptional harmonistic ingenuity, be made to dovetail into each other. And still more difficult of reconciliation are the stories of the resurrection, even if we limit ourselves to the Synoptists and leave out of account the evidence of Paul and John. The difficulties are less acute with the Passion story but they are by no means absent. And similarly with the report of the

words of Jesus. It is just in some of the most vital points that the difference is most marked; the beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the words of institution at the Last Supper, the words from the Cross. A more minute investigation discloses a still larger range of discrepancy. We can often, in fact, see how the discrepancy between Matthew and Luke in the threefold tradition has arisen from their different handling of the common source in Mark. And this shows that it is not with independent information that we have to do, from which we may supplement the account of Mark, but with the transformation of the original material in harmony with the evangelist's point of view. Not necessarily that this is always the case. It is quite likely that at several points historical details which were either floating in the tradition of the Church or fixed in writing, or derived from some eye-witness may have come into the later Gospels, in particular Luke, who appears to have investigated on his own account and possessed in addition to Mark and Q a valuable special source. But I could not deny that a considerable element of uncertainty attaches to the features in the Triple Tradition which are peculiar to Matthew and Luke. So far as the Double Tradition is concerned, the coincidence between the sources is greater than in the Triple Tradition. This of course is natural, inasmuch as the report of speeches would vary less than that of incidents, and presumably be more fully protected by the sense of reverence. Yet, even here, as I have already pointed out, there are striking differences which lie on the surface, and warn us against too implicit a trust in the uncriticized record. And in the matter peculiar to Matthew and Luke the scientific historian is bound to a similar caution, more fully perhaps in the case of the First Gospel than in that of

the Third. Nor can we acquiesce in the position that at any rate we have the rock beneath our feet when we come to the Gospel of Mark. The fact that this is our earliest source, while it entitles it to primacy does not in itself warrant an indiscriminate acceptance of its statements. The interval which lay between the events and the composition of the Second Gospel was probably not less than a quarter of a century and was in all likelihood more. It lies in the nature of the case that during this period the sharpness of detail might become blurred, the material might pass into new combinations. The practical purposes for which the incidents were narrated may have coloured them, the conditions and problems of a later generation may have been unconsciously read back into the Master's life. We might conceivably have also to lay our account with deliberate transformation of the material in the interests of a theory, as indeed Wrede calls us to do in his work on *The Messianic Secret in the Gospels*.

Now all these conditions warn us that historical accuracy must not be claimed for the Bible to the extent that was once considered essential. We must in fact be prepared to admit that the unhistorical elements in it are more considerable than many who would repudiate the doctrine of verbal inspiration have yet realized. No doubt what really prevents many from frankly recognizing this is the feeling that if once they relax the rigid doctrine of inerrancy they will be able to find no secure basis on which to rest. If once they admit the presence of error, with what confidence, they ask, can they turn to the Bible assured that they have in it a faithful record of the essential facts or an infallible guide in faith or conduct? Some even go so far as to tell us that it is all or nothing with them, a proved error in Scripture would invalidate the whole.

This extreme position is barely rational.[1] No one would dream of handling any other history or literature in that way. No one would contend that, because the beginnings of Greek and Roman history are full of legends, we cannot therefore accept the later history as accurate or believe in the historical existence of Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar. There is much both in the Old and the New Testament which is accepted as genuine history by extreme critics who have not completely lost touch with reality or bidden adieu to historical sanity. Moreover I must remind those who insist on the highest doctrine of Scripture that no one can precisely say what Scripture contains. I have already dwelt on this in what I have said with reference to Textual Criticism and the growth and definition of the Canon. There is the greatest uncertainty as to the true text of innumerable passages of Scripture some of which are of grave theological importance. Even now Christendom is by no means united on the very important question as to what books should be included in the Canon. Accordingly it is not possible for us even to define with any approach to certainty the literature for which infallibility is claimed.

[1] Compare what Martineau says on this point: "Thus to stipulate for everything or nothing, and fling away whatever is short of your fancied need, is the mere waywardness of the spoilt child: it is a demand absolutely at variance with the mixed conditions of any possible communion between perfect and imperfect natures. Not heaven itself can pour more or purer spiritual gifts into you than your immediate capacity can hold; and if the Holy Spirit is to 'lead you into *all truth*,' it will not be by saving you the trouble of parting right from wrong, but by the ever keener severance of the evil from the good through the strenuous working of a quickened mind." (*The Seat of Authority in Religion*, 2nd ed., p. 288.)

The question, however, is not, Have we everything in a form on which we can entirely rely? But Have we as much as is necessary for our vital beliefs? Criticism might no doubt eat away the historical foundations until they were at once too narrow and too fragile to bear the weight of our religion or make room for it in all its length and breadth. But while criticism may have introduced an element of uncertainty into the Biblical narrative enough remains to form a secure historical foundation for Christianity. So far as the story of the Old Testament is concerned we may cheerfully allow the presence of myth in the earlier and of legend in the later sections. The main lines along which the nation developed are nevertheless quite clear, so too are the intimate relations in which the religion stood to the history. We can make out enough to be assured that here we have a guided development which moves on with steady march to its culmination in the Gospel. And in the New Testament this is even more the case. The full recognition that the story even in the Synoptic Gospels is not all on the same level of accuracy and that into the oldest sections of it inaccuracy may have entered, does nothing to discredit the central facts. Strained harmonistic devices are distasteful to those who abide in a region where petty discrepancies cannot rise to ruffle the calm. Their hold on the essential truth of the history is too firm for their grip of it to be shaken by the nervous tremors which unsettle the faith of more timid and anxious souls.

What we really need is first of all an assurance as to these central facts, secondly a vivid impression of the personality, and thirdly an authentic report of His message. And we are not limited to the Gospels in our attempt to discover these. We have the evidence of the Pauline Epistles, many and perhaps all of them probably

written before our Gospels had been compiled. These assure us of the facts apart from which the religion could not live. They contribute, it is true, comparatively little to our knowledge of Christ's teaching. It might seem that we learn comparatively little from them as to the character of Jesus. But quite apart from the explicit references, which while incidental are significant, we must allow not a little for the impression of Christ reflected in the ideal of Christian character sketched in Paul's great ethical passages. His own character had been profoundly transformed by his contact with Christ, and it was with no visionary Christ of his own fancy, the projection of his own ethical ideal. The Christ of his faith was no abstraction of theology but filled with a living content by his familiarity with the Jesus of history. Thus Paul corroborates the impression made upon us by the Gospels. Even if negative criticism refused us the use of the Synoptic Gospel, we could make out a substantial case from the four Epistles which the Tübingen criticism left us.

And when we turn to the Gospels themselves we do well to trust the immediate impression which they make upon us. Schmiedel has argued that we can infer with certainty the historical existence of Jesus from the presence in the Gospels of things which cannot have been invented. In view of the fact that reverence for Jesus tended more and more to obliterate the features in the tradition which accentuated His human limitations we may be quite sure that passages of this kind point to the existence of a man, whom by successive stages His followers exalted to Divine rank. Of course those who hold that the Christian religion grew out of a pre-Christian cult of a Jewish god Jesus, explain these passages in a diametrically opposite way,

finding in them the last stages in the humanization of this Divine being and denying altogether that Jesus of Nazareth ever existed at all. As this view needs no discussion at the present point we may recognize the validity of Schmiedel's principle, that features of this kind cannot have been invented, since they created difficulties for the growing reverence of the Church and we can still observe the tendency to explain them away at work. Perhaps it should be explicitly said, in view of the strange misunderstanding to the contrary, that Schmiedel had no intention of affirming that these passages alone survive a searching scientific criticism. On the contrary he fully recognized the existence of much besides that was genuine. The nine passages which could not have been invented, served him as a criterion by which to test the authenticity of the rest. They were, however, picked out with a prejudice. Holding a purely humanitarian doctrine of Christ's Person, he made too arbitrary a selection of the nine foundation pillars on which the structure was to be reared, the interpretation was occasionally strained, and certainly he did not bring out the features which were most characteristic. If we read the Gospels and permit them to make their direct impression upon us, there is a very large element in them which authenticates itself to us as impossible of invention. This is peculiarly the case with many of the words of Jesus. They bear unmistakably His inimitable stamp. But the incidents also constantly carry with them their own guarantee, at least to minds that are not too much sophisticated by the over-suspicious scrutiny which is always asking what tendency has been at work, what motive has led to the shaping of the story in this form? The very triviality of some of the incidents bespeaks our favourable consideration,

these can never have been invented for they would have been less homely and more dignified. But for our purpose they are often most valuable. It is just these little touches which are the most characteristic and revealing. The greatness of a man is not always best measured by his handling of a great situation, for there the very occasion is a challenge and may make him for the time nobler and greater than himself. His greatness is sometimes more vividly seen in little affairs, where he is not conscious that he has a great part to play, but just acts as he is. He is not then posing in full uniform for the painter, but caught all unawares in undress by the photographer. It would be foolish then to complain that at times through their very trivialities the Gospels fall below the dignity of their subject, they are in the very narratives against which such complaint might be urged making an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of the Person.

Nor must we forget that for our Lord's ministry we have at least two sources which we may fairly regard as first-rate, Mark and Q. I should go further and claim for some of the special matter in Luke a rank very little, if at all, inferior. Moreover, I believe that the Fourth Gospel contains a certain amount of first-rate historical matter. But, waiving these two latter sources, Mark and Q, by general if not universal consent, do give us largely trustworthy information, or at least are sources from which not a little historical matter may be derived. Opinion is divided as to whether either of the writers was acquainted with the work of the other. But whether we argue for such acquaintance or believe, as I am inclined to do, that they are independent, they at least in all probability represent different currents of tradition. At several points they coincide,

but owing to the fact that one is largely narrative the other almost entirely discourse, the range of coincidence is naturally much less than it otherwise might have been. Still the two documents give a harmonious picture of Jesus, though the impression we should derive from either alone might be different from that given by the other, just as the two eyes combine to give a single representation of the object, though each of them acting independently would place it in a different position.

Moreover we must insist that an effect demands an adequate cause. Even were much more in the Gospels than is at all likely, the creation of the primitive Church rather than of Jesus, yet the primitive Church was His creation and what it achieved was due to the impulse which He and no other gave. And indeed the same is true of Christianity as a whole. It is no invincible prejudice which causes one to read the elaborate demonstrations that Jesus never lived without feeling that they really shake the ground on which our faith in His historical existence rests.

It is sometimes said that we ought to approach the fresh discussion of a subject with an open mind, and in a sense such a demand is legitimate. We ought, in other words, to be ready to revise our dearest beliefs if adequate reason should be offered. But if it means that we are to enter upon a discussion of this kind without strong initial bias in favour of our own views, then I must disclaim any attempt to reach a standard of this kind. When one has been engaged in the investigation of the subject for a good number of years and has reached definite conclusions with reference to it, he approaches the attempt to overthrow long-established conclusions with a readiness to hear and to weigh what can be said for the new position, but with very little expectation

that the writer will be successful in the enterprise. He approaches it with the long-held and carefully-tested arguments for his own position in his mind, and he knows that the author must not simply bring forward ingenious and plausible arguments for his position, but that he must dislodge his reader from his entrenchments. It is quite easy to heap together parallels to this detail or that, especially if one is unfamiliar with the language or the religion from which the parallels are drawn, if one ventures on equations with an audacious disregard for the laws of Comparative Philology, or is indifferent to taking parallels where one can find them, from Greenland to Patagonia and from China to Peru. It is quite easy to let bold affirmation take the place of strict, methodical and scientific investigation. It is quite easy, as Whately's *Historic Doubts* showed, to point out glaring improbabilities in what every one knows to be unquestionable fact. But what is not easy is to write an account of the origin of Christianity from which the Person of Jesus is left out and to make it plausible even to those who have been impressed by ingenious manipulation of parallels with other religions. It is not easy to explain how the figure of Jesus was invented or even grew up by mythical accretion into the creation which has for many centuries seemed to an innumerable multitude, and these in many instances themselves not Christians, to embody alike the human and the Divine ideals. Nor yet is it easy to explain how Christianity, handicapped as it was in many ways, should have had the career which has been accorded to it, or won the position which it has attained. That a petty Jewish Messianic sect, despised and cast out by its own people and weighted with what must have seemed the grotesque absurdity of proclaiming as its Leader

one who had died on the cross [1] and risen from the dead, should have gained its amazing triumph is an insoluble puzzle apart from the impact of the personality of Jesus Himself.

And when we turn from those extremists who deny the historical existence of Jesus to those scholars who heartily accept it but refuse to admit that He transcended the limitations of our humanity, we have a similar feeling that the effect is too great for the cause. Either we feel that the facts as presented by the writers distend their cramped formulæ to bursting point, and we realize how deep-seated is the prejudice against the Catholic doctrine which necessitates the violent pressure to which the facts are exposed ; or we are left wondering how, if Jesus was no more than the rather commonplace reformer and martyr whose acquaintance we have made in their pages, Christianity

[1] We cannot account for the form which Jewish Messianic doctrine assumed in Christianity apart from the fact of the Crucifixion. It is possible that in the first century of our era a doctrine of a suffering Messiah may have been current in Judaism, though no adequate evidence for this has been offered, but the mode of death was such that no Jew could ever have attributed to a Messiah. Crucifixion was an accursed death, and brought the victim under the ban of God's Law. We can see what a difficulty it presented to the early Christians themselves. Propagandists of a new faith do not invent gratuitous difficulties, and while the message of a crucified Messiah was foolishness to the Greeks, it was a grave and in many instances an insuperable stumbling-block to the Jews. There are many other arguments which seem to me quite conclusive, but until this particular argument is met, one would be justified in considering oneself as dispensed from further troubling about the matter. For a fuller development of the argument I may refer to the lecture ' Did Jesus Rise Again ? ' in which I first put it forward, also to *Christianity : Its Nature and Its Truth*, pp. 156–158.

ever got away sufficiently to outdistance all its rivals in competition for the allegiance of the most progressive nations in the world. But if from the effect we argue back to the personality then our estimate of the personality reacts on our valuation of the narrative. Much which might be set aside as mythical or deemed to be legendary excrescence on a slender historical nucleus assumes another aspect when we consider who He was of whom these things are told. These scholars, in fact, leave us at the end much unassailable territory, from which we may proceed to reconquer not a little that they have abandoned to the enemy.

It is very significant how from so many sides we are being forced back to a study of Jesus. It is not the theologian only, nor even the members of Christian Churches, who take their profession seriously, for whom Jesus constitutes an object of deep and abiding interest. The rumour that from the sands of Egypt some new fragments of His utterances have been discovered arouses widespread notice even among those who are not identified with religion at all. Those who are interested in the social and political problems of our time, or in its deep ethical questions, are eager to know what light the words of Jesus cast upon these. Where the churches have lost the confidence of the people, the name of Jesus still excites enthusiasm. And all who are alive to the enormous place that Christianity has filled and is likely to fill in the history of the world recognize how important it is that we should understand the life and character and teaching of Him who gave the first impulse to the movement. But then the question comes, How are we to assure ourselves that we know Him aright ? We cannot follow the suggestion of those who would lay claim to a mystical knowledge of Jesus such as would release them from the need of

historical study. To reconstruct the character of Jesus from our inward experience of Him is a pursuit which can lead only to disappointment. The Christ of faith is identical with the Jesus of history, but unless we wish to create a Christ of our own imagination we must not cut ourselves loose from the Jesus of the Gospel story. And therefore we must go back to the documentary sources and gain our knowledge in the first instance from these.

It is thought by some that the early Christians were concerned but little with the memories of Christ's earthly life. They were too conscious of His presence with them in the Spirit, too absorbed in the expectation of His visible return on the clouds of heaven to spare time for reflection on the past. But what are we to make of the existence of our Gospels? Do they not testify to the existence of a historical interest in the Early Church? I grant, of course, that they are not history in our sense of the term; on that I do not need to repeat what I have already said. But we can see that there was a section in the Early Church keenly interested in details of our Lord's life and teaching, otherwise we should have had no Gospels at all. It was because a healthy instinct saved the Church from separating the historical Jesus from the glorified Christ that Gospels began to be written. It is true that these Gospels in their present form are later than the Pauline Epistles. Our earliest narrative, the Gospel of Mark, belongs probably to the sixties, and when it was written Paul had passed away. But this Gospel embodied the reminiscences of Peter, and not reminiscences, be it observed, that he communicated to Mark privately, but reminiscences which formed much of the staple of his public discourses. In other words, not only was Peter interested, as would be

natural, but there was a widespread interest among his hearers in these matters. Perhaps even earlier than this, Matthew had composed in Aramaic his collection of the sayings of Jesus which are now embodied in our first and third Gospels. And here again we must suppose that a long-standing interest has found literary expression. In view of these facts, to which I may add the reference to the numerous attempts at writing Gospels mentioned by Luke, it seems unreasonable to argue that the early Christians thought little of the life or teaching of Jesus when He was with them on earth.

We have had many Lives of Jesus within the last century. To mention only a few of the more outstanding, we have had the works of Strauss and others deliberately designed to shatter faith in the correctness of the Evangelic records; Neander's counter-life for which Strauss proposed the biting motto, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief'; the famous work of Renan designed to interpret Jesus, but misreading Him vitally through his own limitations; Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, noblest of all the rationalistic Lives of Jesus, if indeed 'rationalistic' be not too unjust an epithet; the laborious work of B. Weiss resting on a criticism more sound than that of Keim, and with a mastery of New Testament scholarship few have been able to rival, the work withal of a believer. But from the best of our biographers—critical, painstaking, illuminating though they may be—we turn back to the Gospels with relief. With all the best resources of modern scholarship and literary skill we have nothing that can be mentioned in the same breath with these wonderful books. They are simple, unpretentious, unadorned; they are without the graces of style and expression and rely for their gift of enchantment on

nothing but the fascination of their story. Some things which they tell us seem but of trivial importance, while on other matters of great moment the record is bald and meagre, or perhaps they are silent altogether. Even the words of Jesus are not preserved to us in their original form, they are but a translation into Greek of His Aramaic discourses. And yet in spite of all these grave limitations, made graver still for the ordinary Christian, that he must be content with an inadequate translation into English, where in all literature have we anything that vies for its magic power with these plain and simple narratives? It was no genius, in the authors of the first three Gospels at any rate, which endowed these writers with their qualities, it was rather the Figure of whom they spoke that turned these commonplace men into the creators of the most vital literature the world has known.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PROBLEM OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

One of the gravest problems will be felt by many to lie in the realm of Biblical Theology. It is created partly by a comparison with the institutions and ideas of other peoples, partly by the divergence which seems to exist within the Bible itself. Instead of a Divine revelation incomparable and unique, wholly heavenly in its origin and protected against foreign admixture, we have innumerable links of connexion with the ritual, the laws, the religions of other peoples. The isolation, which seemed to set in solitary splendour the Bible and the revelation that it enshrined, appears to have passed away, and now it stands in the judgment of many as just one member, even though it may be the most important in a series of sacred books. And to the loss of uniqueness we must add a loss of unity, and that not only between the Old Testament and the New but within the Old Testament, while within the New Testament itself we have to recognize the presence of divergent points of view.

We cannot escape from the former difficulty by denying the intimate connexion with the foreign environment. The average man is inclined, when he thinks of coincidences between the Bible and the literature or customs or religious ideas of another people, to assume that the originality lies with the Bible and the indebtedness on the other side. Thus I have heard a missionary

express his conviction that the people among whom he laboured must at some time have been under Hebrew influence because he found notions and customs prevalent amongst them which are familiar to us from the Book of Leviticus. But these very notions and customs are far too ancient and too widely spread for such an explanation to be tenable. They are found existing among the remotest peoples, separated from the main stream of progress for many thousands of years and dissociated both from each other and from the Hebrews. Those who knew ancient history simply from the Bible not unnaturally thought of the Hebrews as one of the oldest nations of antiquity, but now we know that they were a very young nation. Great empires and advanced civilizations had existed for thousands of years before the time of Moses, and both he and the people whom he formed into a nation drew on resources of foreign origin. Their debt to Egypt was trifling at the best, but their debt to Babylonia was conspicuous. We need not fall into the extravagance of regarding Israel as little better than an intellectual and religious province of Babylonia, but the coincidences between the Babylonian and the Hebrew stories of the Creation and the Deluge and those between the Code of Hammurabi and the Book of the Covenant show clearly that what has been almost universally regarded as communicated to man by Divine revelation had its close counterpart in Babylonian myth and legislation. We may speak of direct borrowing on the part of the Hebrews, or in view of the differences we may prefer to suppose that they and the Babylonians were alike indebted to a common source. The important point for our particular purpose is that far-reaching coincidences exist.

Moreover when we study the Hebrew ritual which has

often been regarded as given to prefigure the mysteries of the Christian faith we are confronted with the same problem. It was not indeed reserved to our own time to point out the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the religious institutions of Israel as symbols of the facts recorded and the theology expounded in the New Testament. John Spencer, the learned theologian of Cambridge, whose massive and masterly work on the Ritual Laws of the Hebrews has received the highest praise from our greatest Old Testament scholars, has a pungent passage in which the objections to this mode of explanation are incisively stated.

"For who that has a little ounce of brain can persuade himself that God has appointed so many and manifold rites in order to represent the few and simple mysteries of Christianity? or has wished to use those shadows and figures for foreshadowing the Gospel facts, which are so obscure and uncertain in meaning, that no one has been skilled enough hitherto to unseal their mystical senses by any sure method? What mystery underlay that precept about throwing the intestines and feathers of birds away only on the east side of the altar? What mystery was intended by the fact that eucharistic offerings were to be accompanied by unleavened bread? that the hair of the Nazarite should be burnt beneath the cauldron in which the sacrificial flesh was cooked? that a red cow should be slaughtered by way of expiation? and not to speak of many other things that at the Feast of Tabernacles thirteen bulls should be slain, on the second day twelve, on the third eleven, and so on down to seven, which were to be presented on the last day? These and many other institutes of the Law do not present the least shadow of a more secret meaning or of anything mysterious to be wrung from them even by torture. I know that the genius of an alchemist can extract something spiritual from the most arid rite and turn the tiniest detail of the Law into a sacrament; but we should be very cautious when endeavouring to lay bare the inner senses of the Law that we are not mistaken, and take a cloud to our bosoms instead of Juno, a figment of our own brains instead of a divine mystery."

His own derivation of the Mosaic system from foreign sources hit the mark in principle, though naturally at the time when it was written the vast accumulation of facts gathered by the students of Comparative Religion and Anthropology was as yet unknown, so that learned though the book was, the true source for many of the Hebrew customs was not rightly stated. Now thanks to the epoch-making researches and theories of such scholars as Robertson Smith and Wellhausen the real state of the case is before us in a much clearer light. We see that the Hebrews drew largely on the common stock of Semitic custom best preserved for us among the Arabs. But this went back in many cases to a type essentially savage. The ideas of holiness and uncleanness alike spring out of the primitive conception of taboo. Sacrifice was a rite of immemorial antiquity, probably in its origin a communal feast between the deity and his clan, crude, repulsive, and it may be cruel, as the religious customs of primitive peoples often are. The Hebrew institutions may be traced from them by lineal descent. The question accordingly arises whether we can still continue to claim a Divine origin for them.

It is not a matter, however, of law and ritual alone, even the ideas are said to have a close affinity in many respects with what we find among heathen peoples. And this affects not the Old Testament only but the New. It is true that the Hebrew people did not present a sheet of white paper on which the Holy Spirit wrote the heavenly message. It was rather like a palimpsest, that is one of those manuscripts on which beneath the document at present inscribed upon them we can detect, and by a chemical reagent make legible, a writing still more ancient. Ideas with reference to God, the universe, man, the future, were a part of the spiritual

possession of the Hebrew people when it first became conscious of its existence as an independent nation. Thus when the Spirit went forth to sow the seed of the Kingdom, He did not cast it into virgin soil. It needed no enemy to sow darnel among the wheat, rank growths sprang from the ground itself and competed with tenacious obstinacy in the struggle for survival. Even a phenomenon so characteristic of the religion as prophecy has its affinities in heathen religion. The tribal or national character of Yahweh with its corollary that His interests and those of Israel were identical, was a firm conviction among the Israelites and all the protests of the prophets never succeeded in eradicating their belief in the favouritism of heaven. The pagan estimate of ceremonial as of like importance with morality was also most difficult to extirpate in Israel. The greater part of the Old Testament ritual is essentially heathen in character. It is possible that for its higher doctrine of the future life Judaism owed something to Zoroastrianism and that religion has left its mark on the Jewish doctrine of angels and demons. It is argued by some that the Messianic hope of Israel and its expectation of a Kingdom of God were derived from Pagan sources.

And while the New Testament has escaped some of these crudities of the Old, we cannot ignore the suspicion that in its apocalyptic and eschatology, its doctrine of angels and demons, it drew upon a Judaism which was in these respects itself dependent on foreign sources. This seems to be quite clear, for example, with reference to the section on the heavenly woman, the dragon and the man child in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, where a piece of Jewish Messianic theology has been incorporated, which presents us with a transformed version of a widespread heathen myth.

Not the Apocalypse alone, however, in this and in other passages, but other parts of the New Testament, exhibit similar features in their eschatology, and we have to make allowance for factors here which had little, if any, influence on the Old Testament. It is still a much debated point whether the teaching of Paul was moulded in any way by Greek thought or Greek religion. Some scholars assert far-reaching coincidences with Stoicism, while the Greek mystery cults are supposed to have profoundly affected his sacramental theories and even his doctrine of salvation. Personally I am very dubious about this, but in principle I can raise no objection to the recognition of such influences. For it can be asserted with confidence that the conception of the two ages in the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the heavenly archetypes which are copied in this lower order, goes back through the Jewish theology of Alexandria to the philosophy of Plato. And it is probable that the doctrine of the Logos in the Fourth Gospel has a foreign rather than a Jewish origin. This doctrine also may come through the Jewish school of Alexandria from Greek philosophy, though possibly the Hermetic writings may give us the clue to its origin. But in any case it is to Gentile rather than to Jewish thought that its origin is in the last analysis to be traced. And even where we are not driven back behind Judaism for the origin of New Testament doctrine it is frequently to Jewish ideas which are not present in the canonical literature of Israel. And this may affect the teaching of Jesus Himself, in particular on its apocalyptic side which has recently been forced into such prominence.

This brings me to the tendency represented by a large and increasing number of eminent scholars, especially in Germany, to explain Christianity largely

out of the complex environment in which it originated. The method adopted by such scholars as Gunkel, Bousset, Heitmüller, Cheyne, and Pfleiderer is to bring together parallels to the Gospel narratives or to the beliefs of the Apostolic age from all manner of sources. Greece, Asia Minor, Babylon, Persia and in some cases even India are supposed to have contributed. Now no objection can be made to this tendency, but similar attempts in other fields warn us all too clearly that the method must be employed with the utmost caution. A long and thorough discussion will be necessary before the new suggestions can be really available for the reconstruction of Primitive Christianity. The need for caution is of course admitted, even by some of the extremer representatives of the method. For example, Pfleiderer in his ' Early Christian Conceptions of Christ ' gives a statement on this very point which is excellent so far as it goes, though I could have wished that his cautions had been even more emphatic in enforcement and more stringently observed in application. If one examines his parallels, while it must be recognized that they are in some cases remarkable, what is really impressive is the fact that the differences outweigh the resemblances. For example the stories of the childhood of the Buddha which he quotes contrast strongly in their extravagance with the sobriety of the infancy narratives in the New Testament. How different from the latter is the story of Buddha crying out immediately after his birth with the voice of a lion : ' I am the noblest, the best thing of the world ! This is my last birth ; I will put an end to birth, to old age, to sickness, to death ! ' The same applies to much that follows.

It is more instructive still perhaps to study this tendency in a form yet more extreme, and an excellent

example may be found in Grant Allen's *The Evolution of the Idea of God*. Of course one could not put the author in the same class with Pfleiderer as an authority on Philosophy, the History of Religion, the Bible or Christian Theology. But his work has been widely circulated and it is typical of a movement which is attracting increasing attention. He was a man of wide culture and varied interests. Science and philosophy, fiction and religion, all in turn commanded his devotion. His reading was extensive and he had the art of turning it to account. He was fertile and ingenious in the propounding of theories. He was master of a very interesting style. But there is such a thing as being too versatile and clever, as letting ingenious fancy outrun sober judgment. With the theory as a whole I am not now concerned. It was a combination of the views of Herbert Spencer with those of Dr. Frazer, the latter developed, however, in a peculiar way, and to this combination the author added a good deal of his own. In particular the hypothesis as to the origin of Christianity was suggested by Dr. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* but with extensive modification. Christianity rose in Lower Syria, a region rich in cults of corn and wine deities, and saturated with such ideas as the killing of the god and sacramental feasting on his body and blood. If Jesus ever existed, which the author was half inclined to doubt, it is not unlikely that He was put to death at the instigation of the rabble of Jerusalem, as a corn and wine-god, or that He may have been a teacher and reformer actually put to death by the Romans, and worshipped by His followers after His death. But whether this be so or not, His name became the nucleus around which gathered all the innumerable practices and ideas associated with vegetation cults. While this remains comparatively shadowy in

the earliest documents, the Epistles, it is yet to be seen in such a reference as Paul's to the seed that dies and rises with a new body. In the Gospels the legend has grown clear and consistent. 'All the elements of the slain and risen corn and wine-god are there in perfection.' In the accounts of the institution of the Supper, especially that in the Fourth Gospel (he means the discourse on the Bread of Life, John says nothing of the Last Supper), the language is strikingly parallel. 'I am the true vine,' 'I am the bread of Life,' 'this is my blood of the New Testament.' So the first miracle is the turning of water into wine, the sending of the Son is referred to as His mission to the vineyard, where the workers slay Him. Like many Divine victims, He is made a temporary king before His death (and one wonders that the author did not refer to Jesus crowned with glory and honour that He might taste of death). He has a triumphal procession, with palm branches strewn in the way, as befits a god of vegetation. He is a willing victim and bought with a price, as in other similar rituals. He is scourged that His tears may flow, crowned with thorns that the blood may trickle from the sacred head, struck by the soldiers, yet worshipped by them, recalling in these and many other details old familiar rites.

What is to be said of such an imposing list of parallels? It may be gravely doubted whether parallels raked together from the four quarters of the globe have much scientific value. We need to be careful in every case to interpret by the context before we can be sure whether we have genuine or superficial parallels. But when we practise this necessary discrimination we shall discover that the theory breaks down. The parallels do lie largely on the surface, the context of the religions gives them a radically different significance. It may, of

course, be granted that at a quite early period heathen ideas and practices entered the theology and worship of the Church. I have already called attention to the fact that the beginnings of this can be traced in the New Testament itself. But it is one thing to say that in a work like the Fourth Gospel, written when two generations of Christian history had gone by, and designed for Gentile readers, the thought has been affected by influences which went back ultimately to Greek Philosophy or the Hermetic writings; or that a similar thing had happened a generation earlier in the Epistle to the Hebrews, or even that Paul had assimilated much in the mystery-religions or the speculations of those among whom he worked. It is quite another thing to argue that the Judaism of Palestine had absorbed such ideas and practices, still more that Jesus or the primitive Christian community had been affected by them. It was a critical moment in the history of the new religion when from the rigid monotheism and fanatical legalism of its native soil it passed into the Gentile world and sought to win a people steeped in the superstitions of the populace or trained in the philosophy of the schools. That Paul should in this respect have become a Greek to the Greeks could have occasioned no surprise; what is in my judgment really astonishing is rather to how slight an extent he put the Gospel into Greek moulds. But we have no warrant for supposing that Jesus Himself or the Palestinian community were affected in this way. There are striking resemblances between genuinely primitive elements in Christianity and elements in heathen religions. This has been long recognized and readers of *The Golden Bough* must have had it brought home to them forcibly. But this means that these rites in the heathen world testify to the need for fellowship with God, which is implanted in the human breast;

and strike out the lines on which its satisfaction was to come. This was done most successfully in Judaism, but not quite fruitlessly in other cults. Yet, surely, all does not depend on external similarity. If other human victims were sacrificed as Christ was, is the character or worth of the sacrifice necessarily the same ? Is not the quality of the victim a vital factor in estimating its value ? But all this gets no recognition, nor could we expect that it would from a writer who airily dismissed the Gospel history as obviously untrustworthy. But when everything is granted as to the possibilities of parallelism, I have no shadow of a doubt that the thesis is radically wrong. In the first place, no cautious scholar will lightly commit himself to ingenious combinations of this kind. It is a very striking fact that no one could naturally get from the Gospel narratives the impression which the author gives. The death of Jesus does not come as a bolt from the blue. It is the outcome of a growing hostility to Him created by His teaching and work. It is a deed of darkness, consummated in desertion, hate and treachery. The triumphal entry is no part of His murderers' programme, nor is the mock coronation and homage to be compared with the temporary kingship of the victim, which, as Frazer points out, was real while it lasted. The narratives, too, represent Him as praying in an agony that the cup might pass from Him, in face of which, Mr. Allen says, He does not seriously ask it ! I am not now arguing the question of the history, I am controverting the proofs for the assertion that Jesus is represented in the Gospels as a vegetation deity. The fact that the Gospels make an altogether different impression conclusively demonstrates that the writers had no wish to give such a representation. I might point out further that, according to the Gospels, the Jewish authorities

contrived the execution, not by any means as an agricultural sacrifice, but as a piece of political expediency. Will any competent writer seriously contend that such passionate monotheists occupied themselves in creating wine-gods? We must remember, too, that our records represent that Jewish hostility to the disciples persisted after Christ's death, which is inexplicable if He was put to death that He might be made into a god. His executioners ought on this theory to have been His worshippers. It is true that the Gospels represent Jesus as using the expressions to which Mr. Allen refers. But, surely, it does not lie so far away to take these as figurative. Or, if not, let us be consistent, and say that when Christ spoke of Himself as the Shepherd we are to think of Him as a pastoral as well as an agricultural deity, and when He said He was the Door or the Way, He meant He was a threshold God (Mr. Allen might have been glad of this for his threshold collection), or a tutelary deity of highways. There are numerous agricultural parables, the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard Seed, the Vineyard; but there are fishing, trading and other parables, which no one dreams of treating in this fashion. The choice of such comparisons was not dictated by the ingenious considerations mentioned by Mr. Allen, but simply by their intimate connexion with the daily life of those to whom He spoke.

Not only is it clear that the Gospels, and the earliest Gospels in particular, do not suggest any such interpretation, but it can be carried through only at the cost of treating their record in the most sceptical way. Mr. Allen vacillated, it is true, on the question whether Jesus ever really existed, but in his book he called it in question. He even spoke dubiously with reference to Paul's existence and thus revealed a levity of judgment and absence of historic sense which largely discounts the

value that might otherwise be attached to his opinion. But if it be granted that Paul lived and was the author of even the bare minimum of writings left him by the Tübingen School, the existence of Jesus is guaranteed by not a little historical information expressed or implied. It is true that since nothing is too eccentric to be beyond the Daniels-come-to-judgment who move airily over our field, Prof. Drews has actually argued that these Epistles may be authentic and yet the Jesus of whom they speak have been no being of flesh and blood. But this passes the limit of serious discussion, and it may be taken for granted that, admitting the authenticity of the literature, the historical existence of a human Jesus cannot be denied. And certainly not as a corn-god of which no trace is to be found in Paul's writings. Nor could we understand the conversion of a highly cultured fanatical monotheist like Paul to any cult of this kind. His interests did not lie in agriculture but in righteousness. The fact is, waiving small details, which are not of moment in this connexion, that the life of Jesus is in the full light of history, that of Paul in its full blaze. Now everyone is aware that it is quite easy to weave ingenious theories to disprove what we all know to be true ; as Whately did in his *Historic Doubts Concerning the Existence of Napoleon*. But if the solid fact of Napoleon's existence and career was not dissipated in this way, it is not likely that similar theories respecting Christ and Paul will stand. Mr. Allen allows that the verisimilitude of Christ's character as sketched in the Gospels is a strong argument for His existence. True, a conclusive argument. But here is his dilemma. If he accepts the historical existence he faces the immense difficulty that such a character should have played the part indicated. If he does not, he has not only the difficulties caused by the witness of Paul,

and by the verismilitude of the character, but also that of explaining how the myth which was intended to depict a vegetation god failed so completely to achieve its end.

Moreover, on his own showing the agricultural element comes out most fully in the later literature. For one who plumed himself on his scientific standpoint that is a rather odd confession. It would be truly a grotesque canon of historical criticism that we should draw our ideas as to the original character of a movement not from the documents which stand nearest it in point of time and are redolent of the soil from which it sprang, but from documents written under other skies for readers of an alien race and in an atmosphere swarming with germs of quite another order. And indeed, leaving aside the rest of the book as to which it would be possible to say much were this the place, the whole Biblical section of it, especially that which deals with the New Testament, betrays the strangest misapprehensions. The trail of the amateur is over it all, without the redeeming qualities sometimes to be found in the work of those who are not experts, with no trace of a consciousness how amateurish it is or of the misgiving which such a consciousness might have inspired.

Before leaving this part of the subject I must touch on the question of the value which would still belong to Christianity had it originated, not indeed as the gifted amateurs suppose, but as such competent Biblical scholars as the leading representatives of what is known in Germany as 'die religionsgeschichtliche Schule,' which draws on the History of Religion for its explanation of many features in primitive Christianity. Confronted by the undeniable fact that within a very brief period after His death the most exalted position had been accorded to Jesus, and yet unwilling to recognize

in Him the Incarnate Son of God, they are compelled to account for so strange a fact. They affirm that this lofty Christology was ready to the disciples' hand. A whole series of propositions about the Messiah had been already created in Judaism itself. The followers of Jesus identified Him with the Messiah and then they simply transferred this ready-made Messianic dogma to Him in spite of the fact that it was a glaring misfit. Arguments may of course be adduced in favour of this view, but I believe in spite of them that the picture of Christ is a portrait of Jesus rather than a mask concealing the real Jesus from our view.

When we inquire further as to the origin of the Jewish Messianic dogma, we are taken far back into Paganism, and the question arises whether if Christianity is an amalgam of crude, animistic ideas, of myths, legends and lower religions, it has any message for us. Pfleiderer answers very emphatically in the affirmative. It is only the crudest form of an evolutionary theory, he says, that would draw a negative conclusion. We have to be very circumspect in answering the question whether similarities are due to direct borrowing, or whether they have arisen independently from the working of similar causes. At the same time he thinks that many of the details in the Gospel story did originate by borrowing. But on the other hand the idea of the Divine Sonship of Christ was not derived from any definite pre-Christian legend, but has its ultimate source in the depths of the religious consciousness. We have further, he insists, to emphasize points of difference as well as of agreement, and especially to remember that a new development is not merely the sum-total of its elements. There has been a creative synthesis which has not simply combined the old elements, but transformed them into something entirely new. Pflei-

derer does not at all believe, of course, that the historical Jesus was, as a matter of fact, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God. For him that doctrine is a myth, but it is a precious myth, inasmuch as it enshrines the highest truth. To the question whether it would not have been better to preach the historical Jesus rather than the Eternal Christ he replies in the negative. To win its way in the world the Gospel had to accommodate itself to the myths, and this had the advantage that thus the limitations of the historical Jesus were transcended. It is here, of course, that the antithesis comes to its sharpest expression. Those of us who believe that Christianity depends for its very existence on the real identification of the historical Jesus with the Son of God, that our faith needs historical facts and cannot live without them, are forced to take up an attitude of complete contradiction to Pfleiderer's wish that we should be free from the slavery of history. It is not by volatilizing away the historical basis of Christianity that the permanence of Christianity is to be assured. Nor do we feel ourselves hit by the reproach that we seek God's revelation only in the records of a dead past and thus lose the power of finding it in the living present. For us the Jesus of history and the living Christ are not two things but one.

But we could cheerfully admit that Christianity, and the religion of Israel before it, had taken up a good deal of heathen matter without feeling that the truth of our religion was in any way touched. We have no objection to tracing back what we can to the primitive savage, so far at least as we are able to rediscover him. The keenest eye for survivals and fearlessness in seeking for them is not out of harmony with a genuine Christian faith. It is an intelligible, though a real fallacy, into which some writers fall, that they can discredit a belief

by tracing it back to the peoples of a lower culture. But we should rather see in these the expression of yearnings and needs as old as man, and experienced by him in all ages and lands. So far from being discredited by their antiquity, their reality is guaranteed by their ubiquity and persistence, and by adopting them in a purified form the Church has recognized in them unconscious prophecies of Christ. A powerful apologetic may be built up on the very facts used to discredit Christianity. If, for example, we can trace back the idea of communion with God, no doubt in a very crude form, to a pre-historic period, we should not argue. This idea springs up among barbarians and therefore may be set aside as absurd, but rather, Here in the lowest stage we find men vaguely crying for fellowship with the Unseen Power; that craving is wrought into man's nature, and is a witness to the living God for whom it cries. What really created the Christology of the New Testament was not the heathen myths but the impression created by Jesus on His followers, the testimony He gave to Himself, the belief in His Messianic dignity which had been attested by His resurrection, the experience of His activity as the ascended and reigning Lord. The personality itself and its impact on history created the doctrine. It was not formed by the accretion of all sorts of floating ideas around an almost accidental nucleus. That the thought-forms of the time may have provided a garb in which the body of Christian truth was clothed is in no sense surprising, but the body is more than raiment and must not be confused with it. This is not to say that the teaching of the New Testament is itself purely Christian or that alien elements may not have been incorporated in it, it is simply to affirm that what is central in the New Testament religion has not been

borrowed from some heathen source. We may feel then that no serious difficulty is raised by the frankest admission of whatever indebtedness of Scripture to foreign sources may ultimately be made good.

But even more than the derivation from foreign sources, the differences within the literature itself constitute a serious difficulty. There is first of all the most obvious of these differences, that between the Old Testament and the New. So far as moral standards are concerned, their existence is widely recognized. Indeed the teaching of Jesus on this point is too clear to admit of being plausibly explained away. His sharp distinction between the lower rules with which His hearers were familiar and the loftier ideals which He set before them, His explanation that some precepts were written for the hardness of men's hearts, leave no reasonable doubt that He regarded the Old Testament ethic as something which was to be superseded by the teaching that He gave. And when we move into the sphere of religion we discover that the New Testament sets aside the ceremonial system, which fills so large a place in Hebrew religion. That this is so in the Pauline Epistles needs neither proof nor illustration. But in this sphere also the principles enunciated by Jesus went deep, and in such utterances as those on cleanness and uncleanness He definitely set aside not merely the traditions of the scribes but the regulations of the Law by making all meats clean. And here again there is no disposition in modern Christendom to galvanize into new life those long obsolete ceremonies.

But it will readily be seen that these considerations do not touch the centre of our problem. That to a race whose religion and morality were originally quite rudimentary there should be a gracious accommodation ; that too much should not be expected of them ;

that material forms should be prominent in the worship of a people as yet incapable of more spiritual religion ; these are things which occasion no surprise. No serious difficulty is created by the low level of morality which many of the characters display. The censure of their conduct by the writers is often unmistakable and severe. It has long been recognized that we must not expect conformity with the ethics of the Gospel from those who were living in a time of less adequate illumination. It is a familiar thought that God took the Hebrews where He found them, in a rudimentary moral and religious condition, bore with their infirmities, revealed loftier ideals to them as they could bear them, and gradually trained them to appreciate the lofty principles enunciated by the prophets. Many of the so-called moral difficulties of the Old Testament have no substantial existence. But when this elementary fact has been amply recognized there still remain genuine difficulties. There are cases where the Biblical writers themselves fall below the level we expect or where God is represented as acting in a way which we must regard as unworthy. The many vindictive utterances which we find in Psalmist and Prophet furnish us perhaps with the best example of the former type. I am not unaware of the explanations which have been offered and the excuses which have been urged for such language. I fully recognize that they afford some palliation. But they do not completely justify it, even if we regard the authors as untouched by the Spirit of inspiration. And what is more important, Can we believe that God inspired the speakers to utter such sentiments as these ? On a historical view of revelation, however, their inclusion in the Bible is a really valuable feature inasmuch as they help us to form a truer estimate of Israel's religion and especially as they

enable us to measure the advance made by the Gospel. We have in this respect to recognize that, whatever inspiration may have done, it did not suppress those elements of human personality which were not entirely in harmony with the mind of the Spirit. With reference to the second type of difficulty it may suffice to say that an alleged action of God has been occasionally condemned as unworthy simply because it has been judged by inappropriate standards. But in cases where the charge is really valid we must firmly maintain that on no account can it be admitted that God ever acted unworthily. It is far better to believe that the human writer was deficient in spiritual or ethical insight.

I pass on to the difficulty created by the internal inconsistencies of the Old Testament. Partly these may be explained by the same principle of development as we find helpful in accounting for the differences between the Old Testament and the New. Granting that the Old Testament preserves for us the record of a Divine education given to Israel, the presence of lower and higher ranges of spiritual and moral teaching appears quite natural. It would be unreasonable to expect the earlier writers to exhibit the same grasp of moral and religious truth as those who came later. The conception of God, for example, exhibits a very remarkable growth from naïve anthropomorphism to a lofty spirituality. Thus we read of the Creator as moulding man out of the dust of the ground, and by breathing into his nostrils imparting to him the breath of life. Realizing that man needs a companion He fashions from the ground the various animals and brings them to him. Finding that none of these meet the need He tries a fresh experiment, and now, casting the man in a deep sleep, He takes a rib from his side and builds it into the woman whom the man recognizes as

flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. He forbids them to touch the magical tree, which would impart to them a knowledge such as is reserved for the heavenly beings, and when they have eaten of the tree of knowledge He prevents their access to the tree of life, lest by winning immortality in addition to their knowledge they should be a menace to the heavenly powers. He walks in the garden in the evening as men do in Palestine, when after the heat of the day the cool wind blows in from the sea. Pitying the crude attempts of the guilty pair to hide their shame He makes them coats of skins and clothes them. Prompted by the same dread of what men might do if their adventurous enterprises were not nipped in the bud He comes down to see the tower which they were building as their rallying centre, and fearing that they may achieve their purpose of reaching the sky, He scatters them over the earth and confounds their speech. And just as He comes down to see the city and the tower, that by personal observation he may inform Himself of the facts, so He comes down to Sodom to see whether it has acted according to the rumour which has reached Him. With two companions He visits Abraham and eats of the meal which the patriarch has prepared for them. He meets Moses at the inn and seeks to slay him, though He would thus have made impossible the very task to which He had summoned him, but is turned from His deadly purpose by the prompt action of Moses' wife. At Sinai Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, with seventy of the elders of Israel, ascend the mountain and see God who refrains from laying His hand upon them. In another passage, however, the desire of Moses to see His luminous glory is not granted, since no man could behold His face and live. Nevertheless God places him in the cleft of the rock and while He passes He covers

him with His hand that he may not see His face, but when He has passed by and the fatal peril is over He takes away His hand that Moses may see His back. So physically by the author of this narrative was God conceived! In the later writers we find a progressive refinement in the representation of God. In its highest expression the Hebrew doctrine of God as Spirit fell little if any short of the New Testament standard. The crude anthropomorphism of earlier times need occasion us no trouble. It was better that God should be represented in a way which secured a vivid impression of His reality than that by premature spiritualization He should be conceived as a mere abstraction.

But we cannot so readily sympathize with some representations of God on the moral side. It is the peculiar glory of the Hebrew religion and above all of the prophets, that it moralized the conception of God. The religion had as its characteristic quality that it was a covenant religion.[1] In other words it was not a matter of natural necessity that Yahweh and Israel should belong to each other as did other people and their gods. He was not to Israel what Chemosh was to Moab. He had freely chosen Israel though He might have chosen any people. And since His existence and His fortunes were not inseparably linked with those of His people He was free to cast off Israel if she proved unfaithful to Him. Thus the religion rested on a moral basis of free choice and on no necessity imposed by Nature. But the ethical quality of the religion was secured also by the character of Israel's God. This is apprehended and expressed in its full splendour by the great prophets and those who wrote under their influence, but from the first we may believe that the sense of His righteousness differentiated Yahweh from other gods in the conscious-

[1] See further on this pp. 230–232.

ness of His people. There is no need to illustrate this in detail or linger on the depth and elevation of Israel's conception of God. It is the imperishable possession of our race. But I must touch on the other side. I have referred already to the nervous apprehension attributed to Yahweh lest man by passing his appointed limits might become a menace to God Himself. The incident with Moses at the inn; the impulse with which He inspires David to number the people, all the more that obedience to the Divine prompting involves the monarch in a sense of guilt and brings on His land a terrible pestilence; the approval accorded to the suggestion of the spirit that he should be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets to lure him to his doom; the ruthless extermination of a people in revenge for a wrong inflicted on Israel generations earlier, and the inclusion even of the innocent children in this indiscriminate massacre; are illustrations of the difficulty I have in mind. Here the Biblical writers sanction a thought of God which is not only unworthy as judged by a Christian standard but inconsistent with much in the Old Testament itself. And it is not simply in the earlier and cruder stage of the religion that the difference is to be found. It reaches into the later period and appears in the ranks of the prophets themselves.

Of this harsher and more repellent tendency Ezekiel is perhaps the most conspicuous example. It would not be easy to over-estimate his importance for the subsequent development. It is not only that he was the first to assert principles which found their embodiment in the completed Law which was to rule the life of Judaism, but in other respects he initiated movements and lines of thought which were to come to great prominence in the later history of his people. We see the tendency already at work in him which transformed prophecy into

apocalyptic. His sense of the trancendence and aloofness of God left a very deep mark upon the later Jewish conception. His emphasis on ritual secured a place for the external in the service of Yahweh, with which the older prophets would not have been very sympathetic. His narrowness towards the heathen, most luridly revealed in his prophecy of Gog, was only too characteristic of his successors. His fundamental doctrine of Yahweh's sovereignty and glory is applied by him in a form which a Christian can hardly approve. For him God is an egoist, concerned above all things for His own glory, brooding over the slights offered to His dignity, punctiliously exacting vengeance for the insults with which the heathen have affronted Him. In order to wipe out the stain which had been cast upon Him by the destruction of the Jewish State and the exile of Judah, He entices Gog to come against His apparently defenceless people, so that by its supernatural destruction He may prove to the world that not His weakness but His people's sin was the cause of its punishment. Thus a vast multitude is lured to death in order that God's might may be made known, a multitude that would have lifted no finger against Israel had God Himself not dangled the fatal bait before it. We must feel how sinister a light this casts on Ezekiel's whole conception of God. Can we seriously think that Yahweh entices Gog and his hordes from the far countries, that by their overthrow He may get Himself glory, and that in the name of morality, humanity, and religion ? And this calm sacrifice of the heathen to enhance the prestige of God strikes a note which finds too many an echo in the literature of Judaism. Mingled with much that is good we find a bitter hatred of the heathen far too often on the pages of the prophets. The attitude towards Edom is the most striking example of

this. It is found in Obadiah and Malachi but the most lurid expressions occur in two late sections of the Book of Isaiah, in chapter xxxiv. and the opening verses of chapter lxiii. The latter passage in particular is as repulsive as it is powerful. The poet describes a figure coming from Edom with dyed garments, ruddy like the garments of those who have trodden the winepress. It is Yahweh who has been in Edom, with the day of vengeance in His heart, trampling in the winepress of His wrath the foes of His redeemed till all His robes were crimson with the life blood which had spurted from their veins. All too rarely could one of the later prophets rise to the lofty level of the Book of Jonah with its wonderful width of charity, its noble faith in the readiness of the heathen to welcome the truth, its clear insight into the pitiful bigotry and vindictive hatred of the heathen, which was too characteristic of the later Judaism. Even the Second Isaiah who summoned Israel to accept its vocation as God's prophet to the world nevertheless sank back into a narrow nationalism and regarded Israel as God's favourite and the nations as its menials. And other prophets were only too ready to fan the unholy flames of racial antipathy, and bitter remembrance of wrongs. This feature of course is even more prominent in some of the Psalms and assumes its most objectionable form in the Book of Esther.

Or take again the difference in the attitude towards the ceremonial element in religion. It has been pointed out already that the Hebrews drew for their ritual largely on the common stock of Semitic custom and that behind this we can discern a stage for which the closest parallels are to be sought in savage practice. Thus the cultus was, as Wellhausen has put it, the heathen element in the religion. It remained largely

uncriticized in the earlier period, though we are not without great sayings emphasizing the inferiority of ritual to morality: 'Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.' But it is with the great canonical prophets that this principle finds its classical expression. First there are the impassioned words of Amos: 'I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as an everflowing stream' (Amos v. 22–24). Hosea says, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings' (Hos. vi. 6). Isaiah asks the abandoned rulers and the misguided people, who throng to the temple in their darkest hour, of what avail their sacrifices may be: 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to see my face, who hath required this at your hand? No more shall ye trample my courts to bring me oblations, incense of abomination is it unto me; new moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with, fasting and festal assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them' (Isa. i. 11–14). Jeremiah strikes a similar note: 'To what purpose cometh there to me frankincense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from the far country? your

burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me' (Jer. vi. 20). In the Psalms too the same attitude is expressed, notably in the great words in the 51st Psalm: 'For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise' (Ps. li. 16, 17).

And now turn to the Law and mark the difference. Here we have the most elaborate regulations as to sacrifice and other ritual observances. Great importance is attached to them and they are enjoined with severe penalties for non-observance or even for irregular obedience. The covenant between Yahweh and Israel was instituted by blood of sprinkling. It was maintained by the daily sacrifice. The suspension of this offering struck the deadliest chill into the hearts of the Jews, just because it seemed to snap the tie which bound Yahweh and His people together. We can see this from the way in which for Joel the cessation of the meal and drink offering stands out among the ravages occasioned by the locusts; from the manner in which Daniel speaks of it; and from the deep despondency which the suspension caused to the Jews in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. No event could be more ominous of disaster. One of the bitterest consequences of exile was that no sacrifice could be offered in an unclean land.

Two facts, moreover, must be remembered about the attitude of the Old Testament to the sacrificial system. One is that prophets and priests were not ranged in entirely different camps, the other is that the religion does not exhibit a progressive emancipation from ritual and ceremonial. On the former of these points it is important to remember that, whereas the Canonical

Prophets from Amos to Jeremiah took up the attitude to the ceremonial system which I have described, with Ezekiel a new tendency emerged which was destined to have very far-reaching consequences. Deuteronomy it is true represents a blending of prophetic with priestly ideals, but Ezekiel carries this out in a far more systematic way. He emphasizes the ethical and spiritual as the older prophets had done, but he is a man of anxious legalist temper and the holiness for which he shows such deep concern is ceremonial as well as moral and religious. The Divine holiness is compromised by Israel's infraction of the ceremonial law, just as much as by sins against moral purity; and in this respect, as in so many others, Ezekiel strikes a note which is taken up by later prophets. And, so far as the second point is concerned, it is to the influence of Ezekiel rather than any one else that the great development of ceremonialism in the later religion is due. No doubt the priestly sections of the Pentateuch to a large extent embody a far more ancient ritual. But in some respects they introduce new features of importance, and, what is much more momentous, the ceremonies gain a new significance. For hitherto they had been largely matters of use and wont. Now they were stereotyped in minute detail and made no longer merely a part of the official religion. They were imposed on the people by explicit Divine command and presented to them as a great series of institutions, which were the Divinely appointed means through which they might draw near to their Deity in praise and thanksgiving, atone for sins of ignorance, and maintain intact the communion of the nation with its God. It would of course be untrue to say that the tendency initiated by Ezekiel and registered most fully in the Priestly Code relegated the moral and spiritual elements in the religion to a position of minor import-

ance. Nor yet would it be fair to say that the prophets attacked the ceremonial system in itself, for their attack was aimed rather at the belief that sacrifice was of value apart from morality. But while it is true that even the most ardent ceremonialist would have emphasized the necessity of right conduct, and while even the most strenuous preacher of righteousness would probably have recognized the value of ritual nor have wished to dematerialize religion completely, there is a very real difference of emphasis.

And yet even here we can recognize the legitimacy of both tendencies. Religion cannot be for us just a disembodied spirit, a temper and attitude of the soul. It craves an external expression, some form of common worship, some symbolism, some organization. The ritual may be austere or luxuriant, the symbolism simple or complex, the organization slight or elaborate, but few can dispense with some visible and tangible embodiment of religion. The less or the more is largely determined by temperament, to some extent by one's general view of the universe, but for most of us a minimum is indispensable. And whatever be our verdict in the dispute between exponents of the more materialistic and the more spiritual forms of Christianity, there can be no serious debate that for Judaism the ceremonial was indispensable. One may well doubt in fact whether the Jewish religion could, apart from the firm organization and the ceremonial expression given it by Ezekiel and his successors, have survived the most serious of all its ordeals, the danger of complete disintegration by the solvent of Greek influence. He encased the still tender prophetic religion in a hard protecting shell, which enabled it to withstand even the deadly fascinations of Greece and the horrors of Antiochus' assault on the very existence of the Jewish faith. We may surmise, with

some measure of probability, that otherwise the religion would have gone down before this combined assault. The protest of the prophets against the over-valuation of ritual remains permanently valid and indeed indispensable. But it would be driving their principles to an illegitimate extreme were we to infer that the abolition of ceremonial would have been gain not loss. The religious institutions of Israel were largely pagan in their origin and among the Hebrews themselves sank often into vehicles of an immoral formalism. Yet the heathen and the chosen people alike expressed in them some of the deepest instincts and yearnings of man's spirit, and received some measure of satisfaction. Crude though the rites might be, along even these gloomy avenues their souls drew near to God. Moreover while the old typology which found in the Levitical system a symbolic presentation of the mysteries of Christanity that were to be divulged in fullness of time has now become impossible for us, it did contain this element of truth that the needs which it uttered and the responses which it offered were the permanent needs of human nature which receive their final and all-sufficient satisfaction in the Gospel. In this way we may say that Hebrew ritual supplied a fit training for Christianity.

I pass on to the inconsistencies which are discovered by some within the New Testament. The most important question touches the relation in which the teaching of Paul stands to that of Jesus. But other questions are raised, notably that of the difference between Paul and the Epistle of James. On the last of these it is not needful to say much. The contradiction as to the doctrine of justification by faith may quite well be formal rather than real, the terms not bearing perhaps the same significance in the two

writers. There is, I think, a genuine difference in their general interpretation of the new religion; but it may be argued that the difference does not amount to incompatibility, each writer makes his own contribution, which is the reflection of what he had found Christianity to be. I am not myself sure that this quite covers the ground; but in a general discussion of this kind the question is hardly worth arguing, partly because the Epistle of James is a relatively insignificant book, partly because the question is part of a larger one. And even this larger question may perhaps be better discussed as part of the problem as to the permanent value of the Pauline theology.

A few general considerations may be offered at this point on the relation of Paul to Jesus. In the first place it is very improbable in view both of his lofty doctrine of Christ's Person and the necessities of his own strategical position as against his Jewish Christian opponents that Paul was so indifferent to the teaching or to the life of Jesus as is frequently asserted. It is true that we have reference to the betrayal and the Lord's Supper, but these stood in such close connexion with the death that they were not to be separated from it. It is also true that we have references to regulations laid down by Jesus which are quoted by Paul as a final settlement in matters of dispute. He refers to the meekness and gentleness of Christ, he says of Him that He knew no sin; he affirms the Davidic origin of His humanity. But beyond this, it is said, Paul exhibits very little interest in or knowledge of Christ's earthly life. Usually it is considered that in this he stands in marked distinction from the original Apostles. This was quite natural, they had begun to know Jesus simply as a teacher, they had lived with Him in familiar intercourse, and

it was only gradually that a sense of His true nature had dawned upon them. Hence even when their Master was taken from them they could still read into their thought of the ascended Christ all the tender and sacred reminiscences of the earthly ministry. They started with one who was a man like themselves, and only gradually came to think of Him as the Son of God. Paul at one bound passed from the thought of Him as a blaspheming pretender to Messiahship to the immovable conviction of His Divinity. Hence one of the arguments, which has been urged by many against the authenticity of the First Epistle of Peter, is based on the absence in it of echoes from the teaching of Jesus and the presence in it of a strong Pauline element. Is it likely, we are asked, that one who had been an Apostle of Jesus would show so little trace of the teaching we find in the Gospels, and so much trace of the teaching we find in the Pauline Epistles? I think that this criticism, while it is telling at first sight, really fails to take account of the stupendous influence that the Cross must have had on Jesus' own disciples. It was to them a perplexing riddle, mitigated, it is true, but not solved by the resurrection. It was a challenge to their own thought, pressed home upon them with relentess power by the criticism of the Jews. How could a crucified felon, accursed by the Law, be God's Messiah? Probably they quite early found relief in the picture of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, and learnt through it to connect the death of Jesus closely with the forgiveness of sins. It is a remarkable thing, as reflecting the sense of importance attached to the death of Jesus by the primitive Apostles, that the Passion narrative fills so large a place in our earliest Gospel. It is not therefore wonderful that Peter should have felt that

even the teaching of Jesus and the reminiscences of His earthly career fell into a secondary place when compared with the climax which His career achieved in His death. Once the Messianic dignity of Jesus was granted, the facts called aloud for interpretation ; the Cross and the Resurrection pressed forward to the centre, and inevitably thrust the teaching into a subordinate place. And since Paul had developed the teaching of His predecessors, that the death of Jesus was on account of sin, into a coherent and elaborate theory of redemption, is it strange that so receptive a person as Peter should have utilized Paul's teaching in writing his own Epistle ?

In the next place we ought never to lose sight of the fact that Paul was a suspected person in the Christian Church, that much of his teaching was cordially disliked by many of his fellow-Christians and that he was bitterly persecuted by a section of them. Are we then to suppose that he left himself open to the serious charge that his teaching fundamentally diverged from the teaching of Jesus ? Could he have afforded to give such a handle to enemies, who were only too ready to denounce him as no true Apostle of Jesus, as ignorance of the Lord's teaching and indifference to the facts of His life would have yielded them ? How could he have gone to those who were his seniors in the apostleship and laid his Gospel before them without being assured that his teaching was in harmony with the teaching of Jesus ? And how on their part could these Apostles have recognized the validity of Paul's Gospel and its genuinely Christian character if they had felt that it had been constructed in complete indifference to the teaching of the Founder ? For this purpose it was not indeed necessary that everything Paul said should already have been said by Jesus.

What was peculiar in Paulinism was very largely its interpretation of Christ's death and resurrection. But even here he was only carrying forward into a developed theory what the Apostles had already taught in a general way. When we remind ourselves that for them also the centre of gravity had shifted with the death of Jesus, we can well understand that, given the Pauline doctrine of His Person, they would have recognized the legitimacy of the Pauline doctrine of His work. If he saw in the death of Jesus not simply a martyrdom but a great redeeming act, he was, as he tells us, in harmony with those from whom he received the Gospel, who also taught that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

The question therefore is not so much whether Jesus had expounded the doctrine of His death as Paul expounds it, but whether He had given the Apostles the same conception of His Person as that which Paul entertained. And when we go to the Synoptic Gospels we find several claims made by Jesus which are best satisfied by the doctrine of His Divinity. It is true, of course, that there are no Synoptic statements asserting His pre-existence, though there are Johannine statements. But when we remember how fanatically monotheistic the Jews were, and remember, further, that Paul's doctrine of Christ's pre-existence created no opposition in the Church, the simplest explanation is that the disciples were aware that Jesus had made claims of this kind. The very bitterness of the controversy as to the Law shows us how bitter would have been the controversy as to the Person of Christ if the Christians had been conscious of any divergence in Paul's doctrine from their own views. Again, the very conception that Paul entertained of Jesus and the passionate love which

he felt for Him, does not permit us to suppose that he could have been indifferent to the life and teaching of his Master. When his Epistles are carefully scrutinized, many features are revealed that may with much plausibility be explained as reminiscences of Christ's teaching. Nor can we forget that in his Epistles he was writing to Churches which may be presumed to have had a familiarity with the details of Christ's life.

Further, much depends on the conclusions that we form as to the actual contents of Christ's teaching. Many of our present-day critics summarily set aside the Fourth Gospel as wholly unauthentic, and restrict the knowledge of His teaching to what we may find in the Synoptics. But even this they pass through a rather fine critical sieve, and are not content without distinguishing between the genuine teaching that they may embody and the late accretions which have gathered about it. Now, it obviously makes a great difference to our estimate of Paul's dependence on Jesus if we remove from the teaching of Jesus all those elements which reveal most affinity with Paulinism. A very frank and incisive statement of this position is to be found in Wernle's *Beginnings of Christianity*. After a long exposition of the Fourth Gospel, in which the writer constantly exhibits the author's dependence on Paul, he asserts that there is no Johannine Theology apart from the Pauline. 'Were we to accept that John formed his conception of Christianity either originally or directly from Jesus' teaching, we should have to refuse Paul all originality, for we should leave him scarcely a single independent thought. But it is Paul that is original. John is not. In Paul we look as through a window into a factory where these great thoughts flash forth and are developed; in John we see the beginning of their trans-

formation and decay.' In other words, the ratification given by the Fourth Gospel to Paulinism as a general reproduction of the teaching of Jesus is here largely denied. The Fourth Gospel according to Wernle, and many another, so far from embodying the genuine teaching of Jesus is a carrying back of Paulinism into His teaching. Our attitude to this will depend on the general view we have formed on the Johannine problem. It is not necessary for me here to travel over the oft-trodden ground, but I may say briefly that neither on the side of external nor internal evidence do the more negative scholars seem to do justice to the facts, and they certainly are betrayed more than once into exaggeration. Every one is aware in a general way of the difference between the two traditions. The student who has worked at the problem in detail knows how marked the difference is. I think, however, that when we have allowed for the didactic and apologetic character of the work which has led to its selection of material, we ought to recognize that we have in it a more precious collection of reminiscences than many are willing to admit. (See pp. 223 f., 306 f.)

But even the Synoptic Gospels are not held to be free from Pauline influence, which is detected by some scholars on a large scale even in Mark the earliest Gospel of all. The abstract possibility cannot of course be denied, but this is pre-eminently a case where criticism is controlled by theological prepossessions. It is assumed that where Paul's doctrine of Christ's Person and Work is found in the Gospels it is not an independent corroboration from the lips of Jesus Himself, but the attribution to Jesus of ideas which in the nature of the case He could not have uttered. Our decision here is of course largely determined by our attitude on the general problem of

Christology. My own reasons for still holding that our Lord believed Himself to be the Son of God in the strict sense of the term and was right in His belief, I have given elsewhere.[1] Naturally therefore I cannot admit the legitimacy of the theological prejudice which controls this type of criticism. Nor do I believe that a sound criticism of the Synoptic Gospels can successfully disentangle an earlier stratum, in which Jesus regarded Himself as merely a prophet and teacher or even as a purely human Messiah, from a later stratum in which He was represented as the Divine Son of God. Only an unreasonable scepticism could deny that Jesus assigned a unique place and mission to Himself. But, if so, a real problem was created for the Church by the death of such a personality. The shifting of the emphasis from the teaching of Jesus to His Person and Work thus became inevitable ; for the death of such a Person must possess a high theological import. The meaning of the death became the most urgent problem, and thus the whole theological perspective was altered. The fact that we have no such developed doctrine in the words of Jesus as in the Epistles of Paul is sufficiently accounted for by the circumstances of the case. The teaching of Jesus is pre-Passion teaching, that of Paul an exposition of his own experience as a sinner who had found in Christ the redemption he had vainly sought in the Law. It is only what we might naturally expect that much should come to light in the teaching of Paul, which could only be hinted at in the teaching of Jesus. Enough that Jesus Himself gave significant hints and uttered certain truths which when read in the light of events and experience justified the development which Paul gave them. The authentic teaching of

[1] See *Christianity : Its Nature and Its Truth*, pp. 209–245.

Jesus accordingly contains elements which, if they do not present us with a full-grown Paulinism, at least suggest certain lines along which the Pauline thought subsequently travels.

I desire therefore to endorse the verdict passed on Paul by not a few scholars, that he was the man who best understood Jesus and carried on His work. Only I desire to affirm it with much less reserve. For several of them believe that on the topics I have just discussed there was a very real difference between the Master and His apostles, a difference which appears to justify as far more logical the judgment of Wrede that this favourable verdict contains serious historical error. If Paul deflected Christianity so gravely as to swing the simple and sublime ethical monotheism of Jesus on to a line which led it rapidly down to a fantastic mythology, from the incubus of which the Gospel has suffered ever since, it would be perhaps just as well if we ceased to speak of him as the disciple who best understood the great Teacher and most successfully carried on His work.

It is of course to be freely granted that the New Testament presents us with several types of theology. The writers are not engaged in the attempt to reproduce some standardized doctrine, nor did inspiration secure a uniformity in their theology. The teaching of Jesus, Paulinism, the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Johannine Theology, are all quite distinct. But this is as we should desire; such is the richness of the Gospel that it needed to be approached from several sides and to be expressed in various ways, if it was to receive an adequate presentation in its classical documents.

I do not linger at this point on the internal inconsistencies which are found by some scholars in the Pauline

theology, since such a criticism would be best answered by the presentation of Paulinism as a coherent whole. While it can hardly be denied that there are difficulties in relating the various parts of his teaching to each other, we owe it to a thinker of such originality and power to be very chary in accusations of logical incoherence and to make a serious effort to weld his statements into a harmonious whole. In my judgment his utterances are not mere opinions expressed according to the mood or the situation in which he happened to be at the time, or the practical necessities of his argument, nor yet the unreconciled juxtaposition of views derived from different sources, which he had not the power to combine into a unity, but they are the application of a clearly understood and connected system of thought.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW[1]

The apologetic of an earlier day defended the truth of Christianity by the convincing quality of its credentials, notably miracles and prophecy. There was apparently much justification for a form of proof which emphasized such excellent guarantees. The argument from miracle naturally seemed very cogent. How could any one do the mighty works that Jesus did unless God was with him? The argument from prophecy was essentially of the same type, miraculous foreknowledge certified the truth of the religion thus foreseen. In our own age when religion is conceived in a less mechanical way, these time-honoured arguments have fallen into the background. Religion, we feel, is not, as used to be thought, a matter to be received on credentials, for, as Hort said, even if the credentials be true what do they prove but themselves? We have now taken the weight of our apologetic from the external warrant and thrown it upon intrinsic value. Unless the Gospel is worthy of all acceptation for its own sake, argument from miracle or prophecy will do little nowadays to establish its credit. The temper of our time is too impatient of such proofs.

With reference to miracles the situation has altered completely. So far from basing the case for Christianity upon them we find that many regard them as one of the chief difficulties in the way of its acceptance.

[1] See for a fuller discussion my paper on *Messianic Prophecy* in *Lux Hominum* (1907).

We are burdened with the task of defending them to a generation which has largely come to the conclusion that miracles do not happen. So our process has to be reversed, we first have to make good the Christian position generally, and on the strength of that defend the miracles as a part of the whole. This is obviously a more religious attitude than the other, since it is better to receive Christ for His own sake, than because His claims are attested by a number of signs. When we have accepted Him we recognize how worthy of Him are the works that He wrought. But beyond this we have the further question whether we are justified in arguing from them to the truth of a doctrine proclaimed by one who is able to work them. All that miracles strictly prove is that a power is at work doing things which we are not able to perform. They do not necessarily tell us anything as the moral character of that power or the spiritual truth of any message it may bring us. The Bible speaks of miracles wrought by evil powers, and Jesus Himself tells us of those who show signs and wonders that they may lead astray, if possible, the elect. Nevertheless, if properly stated, the argument from miracles has by no means lost its value.

The argument from prophecy also played a very important part in Jewish and Christian apologetics. The Second Isaiah had proved the Divinity of Yahweh and the nothingness of the heathen deities by the fact that He could, and they could not, predict the future. The power to predict carries with it the power to control the future, for if another is able to control it, one can never be sure that he may not divert it along lines which will falsify the prediction. Hence the prophet can appeal to the rise of Cyrus and his victorious career as proofs that Yahweh, who has predicted this in

earlier prophecies, is the Power who has the destinies of nations in His control. And the argument from prophecy was prominent in the apologetics of the early Church. The question at issue between Jews and Christians was that of the Messiahship of Jesus, and in this the argument from prophecy was naturally very prominent. Again and again we read in the accounts of the primitive apostolic preaching how the Christian missionaries employed the argument from the Old Testament to confute the Jews and establish the Messiahship of Jesus. The Bereans are specially commended for searching the Scriptures with an open mind in order to test by them the Messianic claims of Jesus. The controversy has left its mark on the Gospel history. Mark and Luke are not so much affected by it, but it has done much to determine the character of the Gospels of Matthew and John. And the early patristic literature shows us with what keenness the argument was pursued; of that the Epistle of Barnabas and Justin's Dialogue with Trypho are sufficient evidence. Probably at a quite early period collections of Messianic proof texts from the Old Testament were drawn up for use in controversy with the Jews. The Christians felt that it was a matter of the utmost importance to their cause to make good their claim to the possession of the Old Testament. They were conscious that they could not present a new religion for the acceptance of the Gentile world with anything like the same confidence as an old religion. Accordingly they argued: 'Ours is not a new, but an old religion. We are the true Israel, the Old Testament is our book, we, and not the Jews, are in the true succession of patriarchs and prophets.' And it was a great point gained if they could prove that hundreds of years beforehand the career of Jesus had been foretold in minute detail. Accordingly they

went to extravagant lengths in pursuit of their purpose to find Christ everywhere in the Old Testament. Reading it with this purpose in mind, it is not wonderful that they constantly missed the original sense of the Old Testament, and that its true meaning was in many respects entirely hidden from them. The interpretation of prophecy which has been current in the Christian Church is a terrible example of the nemesis that overtakes those who use false methods even in the best of causes. Treated by such methods, the Old Testament lost all its proper significance; and this was aggravated by the wide prevalence of allegorical interpretation, which left Scripture at the mercy of the interpreter's caprice.

Fortunately we have shaken ourselves pretty free from these unhistorical devices. All scientific students of Scripture start from the principle that Scripture means what it says, and that we are to take it in its plain and straightforward sense, after this has been determined by the best methods at our disposal. This is not necessarily always the obvious sense to the English reader, it is true; nevertheless we can make no terms with allegorical exegesis. Moreover, we are convinced that the Old Testament had a message and a meaning of its own. It is not a mere roundabout way of saying what is said more plainly in the New Testament. Nevertheless it is my own belief that the argument from prophecy as well as the argument from miracles may still play a useful part in the defence of the faith. Old Testament criticism generally has greatly strengthened apologetics, and we might expect that the argument from prophecy should be capable of reconstruction, so as to be a strength rather than a weakness to Christianity. But it needs to be stated in a very different form from that which it used

to assume. The progress of Biblical scholarship has destroyed the argument in its old form. Some of the passages that were quoted with the greatest confidence have been shown by a strict exegesis, which has taken full account of the context, to have no such reference at all. To keep it up in its old form is no longer honest, and is in fact to do harm rather than good. The problem thus presented is whether the argument should be restated or abandoned.

The first principle on which I should lay stress in reconstructing the argument from prophecy is that its main emphasis must lie on the general movement rather than on details. The old-fashioned line of proof could not as I have said elsewhere (*Lux Hominum*, p. 46), see the wood for the trees. It was too much preoccupied with proving that the Old Testament contained a life of Christ written centuries beforehand. It busied itself with instituting a parallel between isolated facts in the career of Jesus and isolated texts or passages in the Old Testament. The objections to such a procedure are clear. It involved a good deal of violence in many instances to force the correspondence ; passages were taken out of their original context and a meaning imposed on them which they could not honestly bear. In the next place there was the possibility that in some instances Jesus deliberately adapted His action to details in the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. For example the form which His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem took was due to His deliberate intention to put forward the claim to be the Messiah. In that case we can base no argument on the correspondence between the Old and New Testament to prove that the prophet had supernatural knowledge of details in Christ's career. We should also have to reckon with the argument that the history has been

told under the influence of these Messianic beliefs. Such and such things were predicted of the Messiah, therefore since Jesus was the Messiah they must have been fulfilled in His life. So long as the old interpretation of the prophetic passages held good, and so long as the facts of the Gospel history remained unchallenged, it was possible to build up an impressive argument by arranging prediction and fulfilment side by side. With a scientific exegesis on the one side, however, and a sceptical criticism on the other, this line of reasoning has lost most of its cogency. I am not saying that it is on this account wholly incorrect, but it has ceased to be of much value as evidence for the truth of the Christian religion to any who are disposed to call it in question.

A far more impressive proof may be built up by leaving out of account the petty details and concentrating attention no longer on trivialities but on the general movement of Israelite religion towards its climax in Christianity. It is the same here as with the old-fashioned argument from design. The constant adjustments that are found in Nature were urged as proof of design, and were considered one of the main supports of the theistic argument. When Darwin's theory of natural selection was first put forward it was thought, both by friends and foes of Christianity, that if true it had given the argument from design its death-blow, inasmuch as the adjustments which were supposed to bespeak intellectual purpose were explained by it as due to the struggle for existence in which organisms survived since they were better adapted to their environment. The extent to which this was really the case is not a matter with which I am at present concerned; but it has long been clear that an evolutionary theory, so far from destroying

the argument from design, really gives it back to us in a far more impressive form. For now it shows us the whole movement steadily moving upward to its goal, and speaking to us of a vast cosmic purpose on a scale infinitely larger and more comprehensive than was dreamt of by the older apologetics. So, too, the great argument from prophecy is that which views the whole history of Israel as moving steadily forward to its climax in the Gospel. Such an argument makes a far deeper impression upon us than the accumulation of detailed fulfilments which used to constitute the proof from prophecy.

In another respect the situation has changed. We now realize that it is a far more reverent thing to suffer the Old Testament to speak for itself, than to make it speak the language of the New, and our reward has been very great. Popular theology has fixed on prediction, and in particular the prediction of the Gospel history as the chief characteristic of prophecy. We have ceased to reduce the prophets to mere foretellers of events, and have realized that their message was primarily to the men of their own time. Their value did not consist in their being a class of superior soothsayers, but in the fact that they proclaimed God's will to the men of their time and were His inspired spokesmen, who revealed the higher truths of His Spirit as men were able to receive them. Their true greatness and significance was never so manifest to us as to-day, though the element of prediction in their work has fallen into a subordinate place. Theirs is a message which can indeed be understood only through familiarity with the circumstances of their own age. It was to their own contemporaries that they spoke their flaming words of denunciation, their inflexible demands for civic and judicial righteousness, the

glad tidings of God's love and compassion, the tender and urgent appeals to turn from the evil way and live. The essence of their message was, it is true, some great eternal principle. But they did not concern themselves with abstract statements of it, rather they fitted it with exquisite precision to the sins or follies the ill-timed optimism or apathetic despair of their own generation. They were pre-eminently preachers, and among the greatest of their order. The better we understand their age, the more prepared we are to appreciate their marvellous greatness; and the more that is appreciated, the greater will be the impression of Divine origin that their teaching makes upon us. As by an effort of sympathetic imagination, we place ourselves in the prophet's audience and listen to his glowing and passionate words, we feel that here we have something which surpasses the reach of mere flesh and blood. In and for themselves, quite apart from any relation to the future, their words often impress us by their weight and grandeur, their keen and penetrating power, as the utterances of the living God.

Yet it would be a mistake to deny the element of prediction in their prophecies. That they did on certain occasions successfully foretell the future cannot reasonably be denied; the evidence for it is too conclusive. Yet so far as it was detailed prediction it sprang as a rule out of the present. They were not concerned with the far distant future. Even the glorious future which so many of them predicted they imagined to lie quite near their own day. They were like those who, looking at mountains from a distance, blend into one great mountain mass what is in fact a whole series of heights. They never guessed through what slow and tedious stages history would bring to realization their splendid visions of the future.

Moreover, in reading the prophets' descriptions of the future, we must beware of treating them in a prosaic and literal fashion. They are not writing history beforehand in the same way in which the modern historian would narrate the past. They conceive the future largely under the conditions of the present. Jerusalem and Palestine are for them the scene of the ultimate development, and the neighbouring nations still play their part, Egypt and Assyria, Moab and Ammon, and the rest. Jerusalem is the political capital of the world and the centre of its religious illumination. These are features which cannot be spiritualized away; the prophets meant them in the literal sense; but it would be foolish to imagine that they are literally to happen, they belong to the drapery in which the prophets clothed their great conceptions. Only so could they have been intelligible either to themselves or others. This is one of those cases where the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. It is not for us to concern ourselves with the follies of the prophetic interpreters, but to penetrate to the eternal core of the prophetic message. If, however, we give up the expectation that Moab and Ammon will occupy the position in the future assigned to them by the prophets, why should we hold to the belief in the future predicted for the Jews in Palestine? A robust faith is not divorced from robust common sense, and our faith in the Divine origin of prophecy ought to be strong enough to be undismayed by the non-fulfilment of such details. We should be unfaithful to our fuller revelation if we allowed ourselves to fall back into the nationalist ideas from which the Old Testament at its best rarely emerges. We must replace political by spiritual ideals, and recognizing that the supreme interest of the prophets is the Kingdom of God, dis-

engage the great spiritual conceptions of it with which they present us, from the local and temporal elements in which they are inevitably entangled.

I now come to the question of New Testament fulfilment. It is an axiom with Old Testament commentators nowadays that in determining the original sense of the Old Testament prophecies we must leave the New Testament interpretation altogether out of account. But when we take up the New Testament we are confronted by the large range of quotations from the Old Testament, many of which are said to be fulfilled in certain details of the life of Christ. I could recommend those who resent even the most cautious conclusions no more educative study than a careful comparison of the New Testament quotations with the Old Testament passages from which they are taken, including the context. Fortunately certain instances are too clear to admit of dispute. When the evangelist sees in the return of Jesus from Egypt a fulfilment of the prophecy, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son,' he is certainly not giving us the original sense of the words, for the reference in Hosea is to Israel's exodus from Egypt, 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt.' How little the prophet had Christ in his mind is clear from the fact that he continues to denounce Israel's unfaithful disobedience and idolatry, and to predict its subjection to the Assyrians. This instance is, however, instructive, for it shows us that the evangelist had no hesitation in applying passages to Jesus which were originally spoken with another reference altogether. Similarly he sees Isaiah's prophecy of Immanuel fulfilled in the birth from a Virgin of the Incarnate Son of God. But it is quite clear that Isaiah himself had something altogether different in his mind. When the Evangelist

regards the residence of Jesus at Nazareth as fulfilling what was spoken by the prophet, ' He shall be called a Nazarene,' he sets us a very difficult problem, for no such prophecy exists in the Old Testament. These facts constitute a charter of freedom for the Christian interpreter, since they make it plain that we are not compelled to conform our Old Testament exegesis to New Testament applications. We cannot suppose that the Evangelist was ignorant that the words, ' Out of Egypt have I called my Son,' had reference to the exodus of Israel, inasmuch as this was definitely stated in the passage itself. Accordingly in other places where the Old Testament reference is not so manifestly different from the New Testament application, we are right in refusing to be bound by the latter when we are seeking to determine the sense of the former. If, however, we look more deeply, we shall certainly find that in some cases, at any rate, the correspondence is not merely literary.

It has been disputed by some of the more radical New Testament critics whether Jesus ever identified Himself with the Messiah. That He did so seems to me to stand fast even after the most searching criticism of our documents. The facts which point in the contrary direction are sufficiently explained by the necessity that He felt for reticence. His situation was really difficult, inasmuch as while He believed Himself to be the Messiah, He attached a different conception to the Messianic vocation from that which it popularly possessed. And we ought not Pharisaically to blame the Jews too harshly for their refusal to recognize in Jesus the Messiah. The Old Testament had spoken of the Messianic King as a great warrior who should crush the enemies of Israel, should rule them with a rod of iron, and shiver them like a potter's vessel.

This military, political ideal was alien to the mind of Jesus. Yet He also made much of the Kingdom of God, and penetrated through the outer nationalist husk in which the prophetic hope had been contained to its spiritual kernel. He had, therefore, to work with the utmost caution, and begin by transforming the ideals of those who came under His sway. He preached the Kingdom of God, but attached such descriptions to it as tended to cancel the political associations that had gathered about the term. When at a single word He might have plunged Palestine into war with Rome, it is not difficult to understand the reserve He exercised with reference to His Messiahship. He did not on that account waver in His own conviction that He had been appointed Messiah by God. Even with the certainty of death before Him, He suggested His claim by the Triumphal Entry, and asserted it before the Sanhedrin at His trial. But He realized that before He could fulfil His Messianic functions He must suffer as the Servant of Yahweh.

The identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant was made quite early in the Apostolic Church. It can hardly be doubted that our Lord Himself had set the example. I have already said, however (p.241), that by the Servant of Yahweh the prophet intended the Israelitish nation which had died in the exile and was to rise again at the restoration. The question naturally arises, What justification is there for the Christian interpretation of the Servant passages? The answer to the difficulty lies almost on the surface. I have already expressed my view on this point in my *Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament* (1904), pp. 65, 66, and need devote only a few words to it now. The Second Isaiah regards Israel as the Servant of Yahweh in virtue of Israel's function in universal history. He defines that function as two-

fold. Israel is Yahweh's prophet to the Gentiles and the vicarious sufferer for their sin. This is the meaning of the exile and the exaltation which is to follow. Now it is plain that the prophet sketched a rôle for the nation which it was inadequate to fill. And on the other hand it is plain that the two functions he ascribed to the Servant were actually performed by Jesus of Nazareth. He is the supreme revealer of God to the world and the vicarious sufferer for the world's sin. Can we then justify the prophet in attributing to Israel what was as a matter of fact achieved by Jesus? To a large extent we can if we take the step of identifying Jesus with Israel. He is the Israelite in whom the essential significance of His people is concentrated, its significance as prophet and as vicarious sufferer. Israel is the Servant of Yahweh only in so far as these functions are embodied in it, and Jesus is Israel just because He is their perfect embodiment. If, then, we ask, Did the prophet himself contemplate the career of Jesus when he wrote his poems? the only answer we can give consistent with the actual phenomena is that he did not. The language of the whole prophecy is too clear to leave any doubt. But that does not in the least forbid us to hold that the Christian meaning was there all the time. We are all familiar with the fact that even human genius utters thoughts deeper than those of which the writer is himself conscious. And where we are dealing with the works of one who was not simply a genius, but an inspired prophet, we may well find that his utterances express truths of whose depth and significance he was himself unaware. This accounts for those marked resemblances to the actual career of Jesus which the poems present, since He who spoke by the prophets knew how

the prophet's words were in history to be realized (see pp. 453 f.).

I may touch more briefly than would otherwise be necessary on the view that in the Old Testament ritual we have a foreshadowing of the Gospel, since on some of the points involved I have spoken in an earlier chapter. Even to-day it is not unusual to find those who firmly believe that the redemptive facts of our religion were concealed in the tabernacle and its ritual. This view cannot be carried out in detail and yet the typology be kept within the limits of sanity. If we would avoid grotesque extravagances we must turn away from minutiæ and concentrate on principles. For my own part I find it difficult to believe that Hebrew ritual as a whole was instituted with any conscious reference to Christianity. Its origin in Semitic Paganism and its roots still farther back in savage custom suggest that if we form this judgment of Hebrew ritual we cannot easily defend our refusal to pass a similar judgment on its sources. And indeed if for something so much loftier than the ceremonial system of the Old Testament, I mean the figure of the Suffering Servant, we refuse to read back the New Testament into the Old, how could we do so for the Levitical Laws? Yet we need not refuse to see in it an unconscious prophecy of the Gospel, in the needs which it expressed and the responses it devised. This is pre-eminently true of the Jewish sacrifices, which uttered in a material form the deepest aspirations of the human heart for fellowship with God, for cleansing and for pardon. But essentially it is the universal need which long before the birth of Israel had been felt throughout the world and formed for itself similar channels of satisfaction.

But after all it is the religion of Israel itself rather than this or that element in it which is the supreme

prophecy of Christianity. We rise above the details, even the greatest, to the contemplation of the movement as a whole. And as we follow it from point to point the conviction grows upon us that in this religion we have indeed a Divinely ordered preparation for the coming of Christ.

It would be quite possible to argue that Christ might have come along some other line than Judaism, that some other people than Israel might have given Him birth. And although this question may seem to possess but an academic interest, a reference to it will make clearer to us why the Old Testament must retain its permanent value for Christians. Just as in the case of man the special line of ancestry along which he came had to diverge from other branches at a point far anterior to his emergence, so we may say that the people and religion out of which Christ was to come had to be selected for special training many generations before He was born. And had He come in any other people or religion it would have been necessary for a similar process to have been initiated far back in its history. To none of the great ethnic religions outside Judaism in their developed form would it have been possible to append Christianity as the final stage, and it is futile to imagine that it could now be tacked on to any of them. It grows organically out of Judaism and could have grown out of nothing else. But since the Old Testament is our main source of information as to the history of Israel's religion, it is indispensable to us for the light which it casts upon Christianity. Apart from it we could not understand Jesus Himself, what new thing He brought, the redemption He achieved, the final word He uttered, the supreme figure in the history of religion He was. He is in truth the lonely summit dominating in unapproachable majesty the whole field of history. Yet He does not

rise sheer and precipitous from its dead level. The history of Israel slopes up towards Him in gradual and sure ascent. We may not detach Him either from the process which led up to Him or the movements which issue from Him. All are needed that He may be placed in His proper context and truly apprehended in all the depth and fullness of His meaning for history.

From this point of view it will be plain that while asserting the permanent value of the Old Testament and its secure position in the Christian Canon we can cheerfully recognize whatever of limitation or error may be rightly discovered in it. We are no longer tempted to impose unnatural meanings upon its words, to fill with Christian content its inferior teaching, to discern a Christian significance in its crude and repulsive rites. Scarcely even by stretching them on the rack could our predecessors extort a Christian confession from them. And we take them for what they are, the utterances of those who stood at a position we have largely left behind. For us they are precious landmarks helping us to retrace the path by which the race has risen. We discern how the Spirit has moulded His reluctant material into growing conformity with His ideal. Hence we expect to find imperfections in full measure, low thoughts of God, low ideals of conduct, false views of life. What is really remarkable to those who come to the Old Testament thus prepared, is that this element should be so much less than we might have expected. The moral difficulties of the Old Testament as they are called, for such an attitude practically cease to exist. They could arouse anxiety only if we insisted on disregarding the plain evidence as to the true nature of the literature and imagine that it was designed to give us a spiritual and ethical standard valid for all time.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NATURE AND MECHANISM OF INSPIRATION

It has been usual to express the peculiar quality which differentiates Scripture from all other literature by claiming for it that it is Divinely inspired. The degree of this inspiration and the correct formula for it have been the subject of prolonged and acrimonious debate. But the Bible has no monopoly of this claim. It is constantly put forward to express the Divine origin of other sacred books and in a degree happily unknown in Christian theology.

We are perhaps inclined to think that certain familiar doctrines of inspiration are rigid to an extent that could hardly be surpassed. One well-known scholar, for example, was not content with asserting verbal inspiration, but went so far as to assert what has been called accentual inspiration. Yet even he, with his high-pitched doctrine, fell below the claims made in some other religions, for he never denied that the books came into existence at different times, and were written by different human authors, and had no existence before they were so written. But in some other religions there is a dogma of the pre-existence of the sacred books, or even of their eternity. For example, when Dr. Fairbairn was in India he

was discussing a question of theology with a Brahmin, and indicated certain elements in the Vedas which pointed to their composite character. The Brahmin, however, met his argument with the objection that the Vedas were eternal, and therefore could not exhibit signs of composite structure. Now, however strongly our traditional scholars may deny composite structure in our own sacred books, where other scholars detect its presence, they never make such extravagant claims for the Bible as to argue that it is pre-existent and eternal. Nor could a Christian ever be guilty of the blasphemous fancies of some Rabbis that God Himself spent a certain portion of each day studying the Law. Some held that each passage in the Law was capable of seventy interpretations. It was also believed that the vowel points were communicated to Adam along with the consonantal text. Philo held a high doctrine of the inspiration not of the Hebrew text alone, but also of the Septuagint. It is quite true that the doctrines of inspiration which used to be current, but are happily fast disappearing, were not suggested by the phenomena of Scripture itself, but by *a priori* theories as to what a Divinely inspired book must have been. But fortunately the most extreme has not been disfigured by the grotesque and profane beliefs familiar in other religions. Naturally the dogma of the eternity of the Vedas does not prevent a modern scholar from investigating them by the usual laws of criticism.

It has been debated among theologians whether the thought in the Bible was supernaturally communicated and the expression left to the human author, or whether thought and expression alike were dictated by the Holy Ghost, whether the inspiration embraced all topics on which the authors spoke or simply matters of faith

and conduct. But the average Christian probably thought of Scripture as the unmixed utterance of the Holy Spirit. True it came to men through human channels, but it lost and gained nothing in the process, the human element was not suffered to mingle with the Divine. Wherever we turned we had the immediate, uncontaminated word of God. The fault of this whole point of view lay largely in its indifference to the actual phenomena of Scripture. The systematic theologian was considered to be the most competent to deal with the question. Inspiration and Revelation were treated in the Prolegomena to Dogmatics and a knowledge of Dogmatic Theology was considered the proper equipment for its correct treatment. The true conception of Holy Scripture had been fixed by *a priori* methods, and its adequacy was rarely tested by its relevance to the contents of the Bible in anything but a very perfunctory fashion. It was thought quite proper to construct a doctrine of Scripture on abstract principles. Certainly it was much easier to sit down in an easy chair and spin theories of revelation out of one's own brain in accordance with one's sense of the fitness of things than by patient and protracted labour to discover along what lines the revealing activity of God had really moved. And there was a spurious appearance of reverence about this method. Untrammelled by any regard for facts, the theologian could expatiate with the utmost freedom on the perfections of the Bible. Thus a very rigid doctrine of inspiration could be constructed in this airy fashion ; and woe to the man who insisted on bringing these high-sounding phrases to the actual test of confronting them with the facts ! This attitude no doubt still survives among vast multitudes of our fellow-Christians, but for reflecting Christians its

day is really done. The scientific method reigns supreme, and no one can hope for a hearing from those who have been touched by the modern spirit unless he builds his doctrine on a broad and firm foundation of observed and tested facts. The progress of scholarship may be opposed in the name of tradition, but this is almost as belated as an attempt to confute the Copernican theory by an appeal to mediæval theology. The great question is that of method, everything else follows in due course; though, no doubt, agreement as to method is compatible with very wide divergence in results. Once the principle is laid down that knowledge of the facts must precede the construction of theories, no person competent to form an opinion will dispute its validity. And if any should fear that to abandon the older standpoint is a lapse from piety, I will simply ask whether it is really reverent to impose on the facts a human theory, constructed out of our own imagination, and to determine beforehand by our own puny and fallible judgment how God must have revealed Himself, or whether we should humbly go to the facts themselves and by deep and careful study discover how God has revealed Himself? There can, I imagine, be no doubt as to the answer. When we have the Bible to investigate, it is lazy arrogance to formulate our own theories without undergoing the labour of examination; and to lay down the rules for the Divine action and insist that God must have followed them will seem irreverent to those who know how far above our human comprehension are His thoughts and ways.

It may, of course, be urged that this criticism is hardly just to the older method. Those who practised it might retort that they went to the Bible as the source

of their theory of revelation, and therefore conformed to the conditions which I have laid down. But this can hardly be admitted. The method of establishing the doctrine was that of appeal to proof-texts. On the unsatisfactoriness of this method in its wider applications I need not repeat what I am saying elsewhere (pp. 418 ff.). In the present case it is perhaps more than usually unsatisfactory, because the passages to which appeal is made are not themselves entirely unambiguous, and they are very far from giving an exhaustive account of the subject. Moreover, we have no right to confine our attention to a comparatively few formal statements and leave the great tract of evidence unexplored; with the open Bible in front of us it is culpable negligence to leave the phenomena of revelation unexamined.

Such an examination, of course, I do not propose to institute here, but there are two points on which I have frequently insisted that I may mention. One is the fact that revelation has come through history; the other is the large part which has been played in it by personal experience. These are facts which are susceptible of strict demonstration, and may be verified for himself by any student of the Bible. Now whatever else this and other facts may mean, we cannot fail to learn from them that the human element in the Bible has been far larger and more important than antecedently we might have imagined. The water of life has not been conveyed through channels which have left it unaffected. The human factor has here, as in so many other instances, co-operated with the Divine.[1] Let us not be guilty of irreverently wishing

[1] Dr. Orr says: 'There is not, nor could be in Divine inspiration any suppression of human genius, faculty, or individual-

that it had been otherwise, and let us not accuse those who emphasize it of a desire to belittle the Bible. Many Christians have resented any real insistence on our Lord's full humanity while they have formally affirmed it. We are, it may be hoped, wiser, in that we have come to see that His Divinity won its fullest expression through the sacrifice and love which determined the Incarnation. Similarly we insist on the co-operation of man with God in the work of salvation. So, too, we may be glad to recognize that men have been fellow-workers with God in the process of revelation to a degree which has constantly been underrated. But when we have said thus much we have passed into the domain of psychology, and we are brought face to face with the problem in its modern form.

It is a real action of the human spirit, a real effort on its part which is here implied. It would be very unlike the Divine mode of action for the Spirit of God to co-operate with the laziness of man and reveal to him supernaturally what he was capable of discovering for himself. This may be easily shown by a reference to the very instructive preface to the Third Gospel. Luke does not say that he received from the Holy Spirit exact information as to the facts of Christ's career, but he states as his qualification for writing that he has 'traced the course of all things accurately from the first.' This single example is quite enough to prove that in whatever way inspiration worked, it did not exonerate the writer from the labour of patient and exact research.

Revelation is not, I have said, a purely Divine thing, the human factor blended with the Divine,

ity. Limitations in the instrument condition receptivity for the message' (*The Faith of a Modern Christian*, p. 16).

the mental and spiritual energy of the human instrument responded to the stimulus of the Holy Spirit. It was not in communication of abstract truths received and uttered by the human spokesman that the Spirit's activity was mainly to be sought. The truth might be flashed on his soul in some critical moment of ecstatic vision, or it might be a lesson slowly borne in upon his consciousness through prolonged wrestlings and agony of soul. It is a mistake to imagine that this tends to eliminate or even reduce the Divine element, for God is behind and in the history and the experience, with all His living energy and self-communicating grace, as much as in an utterance of which He is the author, and His spokesman the mere recipient. And I need not linger to show once more how much of power and warmth is imparted to the Bible by the fact that God has chosen to speak to us through the history and experience of our fellows. I have in an earlier chapter (p. 281) used the metaphor of light coming through coloured glass, but this suggests too passive an attitude on the part of the medium. The human personality seizes on the truth thus presented, but in assimilating must in a measure transform it. It is much more important to realize how revelation came through a Divinely guided national history, and through the experience of the chosen organs of Divine inspiration, than to worry ourselves to coin a formula in which inspiration should be accurately defined. It is much more important for us to feel the inspiration of the Bible than to construct an adequate dogma about it; far more vital that deep should answer to deep, and that the experience of redemption which it enshrines in classical utterance should be met by a response in our own experience.

We have grown familiar with the fact that the higher developments of religion exhibit a certain continuity with the lower. This is true not only of other religions, but of those whose classical documents are to be found in the Bible. Much, for example, in Hebrew ritual has its parallels not simply in other Semitic peoples, but among savages. There were elements in these earlier types which had to be left behind and sternly prohibited. Other elements could be taken up, raised to higher powers, and worked into the texture of the religion. And we find this true of the prophetic and analogous gifts. Early prophecy as we meet with it in the days of Samuel has points of contact with what is familiar to us in cruder religions. It would be unfair to taunt Hebrew prophecy on account of its poor relations. It is far more to the point to inquire why, with such lowly antecedents, Hebrew prophecy rose to such unparalleled heights. The more we insist on the low level from which it started the greater will be our estimate of the Divine power which raised it to the summit it attained. Not only, however, is there continuity in the historical, there is continuity in the psychological sphere. Many of the phenomena of the prophetic experience are familar to the psychologist, and especially to those who are engaged in psychical research. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, trance-speech, thought-reading, telepathy, prediction are common to the two types. But here again the fullest recognition that the two realms are continuous should go along with an equally clear perception of the differences. That the Holy Spirit should seize and use human faculties which were ready to His hand is only what we should anticipate, but the fact that He starts from the natural ought not to betray us into an inter-

pretation of prophecy as a purely natural phenomenon. Here again we must judge by the fruits, and they are of such an order as to convince us that the direct action of God was needed to produce them.

The conception of inspiration itself presents us with one of those cases in which we may observe the preparation for a higher doctrine in the earlier stages of human thought and religion. In what we know as animism there is a belief in the universal diffusion of spirits. These non-physical entities pervade the whole of Nature. If the savage finds that his arrow does not speed to its mark he will say that some evil-disposed person has given his bow medicine to make its spirit sick. The distinction between the animate and the inanimate which is so obvious to ourselves has no meaning to him. He is, of course, the owner himself of one or more spirits ; four is quite a moderate allowance for him. But he is always in peril of invasion from an alien spirit. Under certain conditions, against which he has to take constant precautions, this foreign parasite may attach itself to the unwilling host. We have, then, the phenomenon of possession ; a power other than his own takes possession of him and controls him. It is, of course, possible that such possession may be voluntarily induced. A man for some purpose or other passes into this state. In the religious sphere the condition is marked by wild ecstasy. Our word enthusiasm means that the person who is so affected is ' possessed by the God.' An inspired frenzy is the characteristic of this state in which the victim of possession is swept out of himself and carried away on the rushing current of emotional intoxication. Thus the Delphic priestess, inspired by the god Apollo, breaks out into the wild chant of her oracle, or the medicine man spins round

and round in the giddy dance till he sinks exhausted on the ground.

A full examination of these phenomena would carry us much too far, and similarly the abnormal psychical states which are closely allied to these would call for an equally minute investigation. All that it is necessary for us to remember here is that the conditions with which we are familiar in Scripture and in religious experience have their analogies in wholly inferior types of thought and culture and spiritual life. Here, as in so many other cases, the lesson is being forced upon us that God has prepared for His supreme revelation on a scale which we have hitherto but dimly apprehended, and that He has laid the foundations deep in the very constitution of human nature itself. Instead of arguing, as some would do, that these lower stages discredit the higher, I would rather argue, reverting to a point I have already indicated, that they are the lowly prophecies of the ultimate achievement. The important thing is not the form which the instincts assume, or the crude explanations which were given of the phenomena, but the fact that the instincts were there and forced themselves into expression. The devout Christian, looking back over that long history in which God did not leave Himself without a witness, as he ponders with tender respect even the darkest and most repulsive features of primitive religion, reverently recognizes that even here the Spirit of God was at work, coaxing, one might almost say, the tiny spark of spiritual life into a clearer and a brighter flame.

The reasons why I have dwelt on these things at the outset will be plain when I proceed to point out that they lead us directly to some of the phenomena in the Bible itself. We are familiar with the way in

which, especially in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is connected with ecstatic conditions, sometimes religious and sometimes non-religious in character. For example, we have the striking statement that when the lion roared against Samson the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid. Then at a later period, when he kills the thirty men of Ashkelon in order that he might pay with their changes of raiment the wager he had forfeited to his companions for guessing his riddle, we are similarly told that the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. The same formula is used when the ropes with which he was bound became as flax that was burnt with fire and fell from him, and he smote a thousand men. In all this there is no religious or, indeed, moral character. The Hebrews attributed a great endowment of physical strength to the Spirit of God. So, too, the Spirit came upon the heroes who delivered Israel from its enemies. It is a similar though somewhat higher conception when to His inspiration more intellectual qualities are assigned, such as the skill with which the tabernacle was constructed. A more purely religious form is to be found in the case of the prophets. Here the Spirit of God seizes them in a form that reminds us of the ecstatic phenomena to which I have already referred. Thus, in the case of Saul and the prophets whom he joined, we notice that there was a contagious ecstasy which fell suddenly on a man, and, as we see from a later story, it might even lay hold on him against his will. What is impressive about Old Testament prophecy is not this enthusiastic character, but that starting from a level so low, it attained so lofty a height. As prophecy advances we notice that

ecstasy retreats; the prophet speaks in a condition of self-control, and what he says is none the less but all the more the Word of God, because the Divine Spirit has gained an instrument more perfectly attuned to His Will.

But without stopping to complete the Old Testament presentation of our subject at this point, I pass on to notice the persistence of this type within the New Testament. The incidents of the Day of Pentecost, and similar manifestations in the early Church, show us that we are still moving in the same region as in the Old Testament. Speaking with tongues, whatever that may mean, was a characteristic note of possession by the Spirit. And when we pass from the New Testament, and study the later history of the Church, we are surprised to find how frequently similar conditions tend to recur. In times of great religious awakening they are especially prominent, and the student who has sympathetically studied revivals is constantly struck with the way in which he is met again and again in his investigations by the same sort of incidents. The rule is for conditions of this kind to go on for a more or less limited period and then to die down. The early glow and enthusiasm, the rapture and ecstasy, fade into the light of common day, but if the transition is wisely guided it should be effected without loss and with a real gain.

It is one of the many signal services which Paul rendered to the Church that he placed these things in their right position. It is inevitable that, human nature being what it is, the tendency should be to over-estimate that which is striking and exceptional. People are dazzled by these things, they cannot see God except in a miracle. They are not moved to wonder by the normal course of things, which is

far more marvellous, if we could only see it, than any miracle could be. Hence the Church was in danger of overrating the value of the abnormal phenomena. And in the later history we have constantly to notice how communities which have sprung out of a revival have been tempted to overrate the value of abnormal accompaniments, as if the action of the Divine Spirit were specially to be discerned in physical convulsions or prostration. Scarcely anywhere is Paul's greatness shown more than in the treatment which he accorded to them. He saw the movement of the Holy Spirit, it is true, in the tongues and other ecstatic manifestations. He was himself so singularly endowed that he spake with tongues more than they all. Had he been a smaller man than he was he would have been swung off his balance by this very fact, and would have thrust into the foreground those elements in the Church's life in which he was himself specially calculated to shine. But he is so far from doing this that he gives them an extremely subordinate position. He submits everything to practical tests. Unless a thing tends to edification it is to find no place in the public meetings of the Church. Everything must be controlled by a spirit of love and not by desire for display. But, while he served the Church well in discouraging these exceptional and unpractical expressions of religious life, he did a service which cannot be overrated in his positive teaching on the work of the Spirit. It is not, he says to his Churches, in the abnormal that you are to find the Spirit of God doing His most characteristic work, it is in the most commonplace circumstances that He is to be sought, wherever a man truly seeks to lead the higher moral and spiritual life. The fruit of the Spirit is to be seen in those

spiritual states and those moral virtues which we are called upon to exhibit in our everyday life. He found the most conspicuous and valuable tokens of the Spirit's presence and working, not in such showy gifts as speaking with tongues, but in those gifts which tended to edification, in the transformation and enrichment of character, and above all in the supreme gift and grace of love. Thus he saved the Church from being carried forward on false lines and set it in the way of a true moral and religious development.

It may perhaps not be thought irrelevant if at this point I touch on a question that is troubling the minds of many to day. What ought to be our own attitude towards similar phenomena as we meet them at the present time? It is not simply a practical problem, but it has some bearing on our special theme, not only in the illumination it casts back on the inspiration of the Biblical writers, but in helping us to judge how far we may fitly talk of modern prophets. When we remember that a large number of religious movements have been accompanied by such manifestations in their earlier stages, we shall look to history for a measure of guidance. It was so with the rise of prophetism in Israel, it was so at the birth of the Christian Church. Again and again they have sprung to life; they are found in Montanism, in the mediæval Church, in some of the sects at the time of the Commonwealth, in the history of Methodism. After a time they die away and a more organized type of worship takes their place. Modern revivals are marked by this accompaniment of spiritual gifts. It is, in my judgment, a belated attitude to treat them with ridicule. We are dealing here with a very complex set of conditions of which we know extremely little. The laws which govern them are obscure,

and we have still much to learn about them. They link on to such things as telepathy, automatic writing, trance-speech, and similar psychical manifestations. Ultimately we shall probably have sufficient material to form a coherent theory. The first commandment for a scientific observer is that he should clear his mind of prejudice. Great discoveries may easily be missed if dislike or contempt should disqualify the observer from placing himself at the right point of view.

But, while this is advice for the theoretical student of religion, it may be asked, what is to be done as a practical measure with reference to them? What is one to do when he is not coolly studying these things at a distance in an arm-chair, but when he is face to face with them as a state of things to which he must take up a definite attitude? This is just the problem with which Paul had to deal at Corinth. His treatment of it is remarkably sane. The question was very difficult for him because theoretically he recognized that speaking with tongues was a genuine result of inspiration by the Holy Ghost. He had himself told the members of another Church that they were not to quench the Spirit or show contempt for prophesying. His own consciousness attested to him the genuineness of the manifestations and a Divine origin. We should have expected him to draw the inference that no check was to be placed upon them. And yet he rises above what his own theory seemed to demand into a clear perception of what the situation really required. It is characteristic of him that he dares to bring his theories to the test of practical necessity, and to subordinate them to his fundamental principles. Tongues are to be kept in check unless they can be interpreted, inasmuch

as otherwise they do not edify the Church. Prophecy—that is, intelligible address of an edifying character—is to be encouraged, but subject to certain regulations. His master-principle, however, is that all gifts are valueless apart from love. And since the Spirit is the Spirit of God, His action cannot be out of harmony with the Divine character. Hence, there must be no disorder in the Church meetings, for God is a God of order and of peace, and not a God of confusion. The principles on which Paul relies, and which guided him so wisely in the handling of a difficulty that even from his own point of view might well have seemed intractable, will lead aright any one who is confronted with a similar question to-day.

It is, of course, necessary that certain precautions be taken. For example, it is obvious that these things are intolerable unless they are spontaneous. It is quite possible for such conditions to be artificially produced. In one religious movement trances were not uncommon, and the wise rule was made that people were not to 'go into vision,' as it was called, if they could help it, but otherwise no steps were to be taken to prevent a genuine and spontaneous experience. We have also noticed that these manifestations have a very contagious character. There is a peril that they may in many cases be purely imitative and external. Then, again, people who are in a state of nervous instability are better away from an atmosphere of this kind. After all, the Christian experience should be healthy and not morbid in its character. And the peril to some temperaments is not simply physical and mental, to nerve and brain, it may be dangerous even to morality. While, then, we must take to heart the warning, 'Quench not the Spirit,

despise not prophesyings,' we must combine with it the companion injunction, 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good,'

It will be clear from what has been said that we should expect to find in those who are chosen to be the vehicles of inspiration a certain natural fitness for this function. Those who are psychical subjects by nature are those qualified to become medicine men, clairvoyants, mediums. And it is a certain natural endowment which qualifies a man for inspiration. True the flame may be suddenly lit in a nature that has hitherto seemed cold and irresponsive, fitted neither by heredity nor by personal character for membership in the prophetic order. When without warning the steady yokel, himself a steady yokel's son, is touched by the Divine fire and what had seemed a dull clod bursts into a blaze, it is a nine days' wonder to his friends that Saul should be found among the prophets. Yet, unknown to himself and unsuspected by his friends, he must all along have possessed a nature fitted to kindle when it was touched by the live coal from the altar. But this is only a low type of inspiration compared with that which meets us in the Biblical writers themselves. One of the most striking features in the history of prophecy is the dwindling of the abnormal psychical and physical manifestations and the rise in moral and religious quality. It is true that the former do not entirely die out. Isaiah himself experienced both vision and ecstasy, and in Ezekiel's career these were present in a much fuller degree. But in the main we may say that as inspiration becomes loftier it operates more and more through the normal conditions of human life. The personality is more self-possessed and balanced, the wild gesture passes into the elevated

and serious demeanour, and the ecstatic utterance into the quiet beauty of perfect expression. In place of the shrill and excited declaimer we have one who does not strive nor cry nor make his voice heard in the street.

And with this change in the quality there goes a change in the qualification. Still the Spirit needs His congenial instrument, but now He desires the religious genius rather than the psychical subject. This is not to reduce inspiration to a higher form of religious genius. But in our desire to guard against the exclusion of the Divine element we ought not to think of the Biblical writers as in themselves no more than ordinary men. It might seem as if the doctrine of passive inspiration rendered the question of the human agent a matter of complete indifference. The relation of the Spirit to the writer was illustrated by that of a musician to his instrument. Yet this metaphor which likens the prophet to the unconscious flute, through which the player breathes what melodies he will, leaves room for the thought that the Spirit's choice is controlled by fitness just as a flutist selects the instrument most suitable to his purpose. And those of us who reject the doctrine of passive inspiration and are unwilling to degrade Scripture into a piece of automatic writing, are all the more bound to emphasize the qualities in the men whom God chose for co-operation with Him in His task. Hence we do well to emphasize the spiritual and ethical genius which was the natural endowment of the writers. And this is not to minimize the Divine element in the creation of Scripture. On the contrary it enhances it. Just as the Spirit of God was at work in the history of Israel preparing a fruitful soil for revelation, so too He was active in the creation of the efficient

medium through which He imparted the revelation itself. The line of ancestry from which His spokesman came, the family into which he was born, the society and the circumstances that had fashioned the plastic character in those early years when indelible impressions are so easily made, above everything the original personality itself, were all the expression of the Divine forethought. The chief of the prophets and the chief of the apostles alike knew themselves to be children of destiny, chosen before their birth for the high functions to which God was later to call them. And this emphasis on religious genius as the favourable soil in which inspiration may secure its most abundant harvest is really helpful. When we are arrested by the patent differences between Biblical writers of the same period, we more easily account for it on the view that one was equipped with a higher genius than the other and therefore his sensitiveness to Divine truth was finer, his spiritual insight deeper and his gift of expression more adequate.

But the co-operation of man with God was not always willing co-operation. Moses shrinks from the task of demanding Israel's release from Pharaoh, Jeremiah from the burden of uttering the prophetic word. But God forces His will upon them so that they have no help for it. When his first forebodings had been verified by the isolation and incredulity, the misery and persecution, to which his vocation doomed him, Jeremiah would resolve in his desperation never again to invite the mockery of his countrymen by speaking to them in God's name. But the torment of the suppressed message was harder to bear than the cruelty and derision of his fellows. It was as he tells us in his piercing words like a burning fire shut up within his bones so that he was weary with

forbearing and could not hold out (Jer. xx. 7–9). Surely such an experience testifies to the compulsion of a real inspiration which had its source in a personal will that claimed him for its purpose, which held him fast in spite of his struggles and would not let him go. Paul who before his conversion had found it hard to kick against the goads had the same sense of Divine urgency. Compulsion was laid upon him, 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.'

Yet we must not suppose that the prophets resented the experience as an unwelcome Divine invasion, which broke down the fences that secured the sanctity of the soul's reserve. Jeremiah is filled with exultation by the word which he dreads to proclaim (Jer. xv. 16). Ezekiel eats the book and finds it sweet as honey in his mouth. Yet he goes in bitterness, when the hand, which plunged him into the trance and held him down, was strong upon him (Ezek. iii. 3, 14). Another prophet looks forward with longing to the evening when in the stillness after the day's tumult his spirit may be serene enough to see the heavenly vision and to hear the heavenly voice (Isa. xxi. 4). If at times it seems as though God tramples ruthlessly on the weakness of His servants, or with inexorable sternness forces them to tread a path which lacerates their feet, yet they know that thus to suffer is a bliss deeper than any that the world can give. They have experienced the satisfaction of surrender to the stronger will when struggle against it had proved in vain.

It is obvious that the hearty recognition of the human element is incompatible with a belief in verbal inspiration. This is indeed negatived by too many phenomena in the Bible to be acceptable for its own sake. Even those who claim inerrancy for Scripture do not venture to claim it for the Bible as it stands. One

cannot complain that they do not assert it with reference to translations, though it is only in these that the revelation is accessible to the vast majority of readers. But they do not affirm it even of the Scriptures in their original languages as we now possess them. Infallibility is attributed to them only as they came from the hand of their writers, before the errors of copyists had infected the text. Of the autographs very much is made by the inerrantist. Whenever anything is pointed out inconsistent with his position he can always fall back on these autographs and say that they were free from the error in question. This, to be sure, is in defiance of all sound Textual Criticism; but, quite apart from this, the obvious question arises, Of what use is it to predicate infallibility of documents which no longer exist? The interest of these people is really to transfer the credit they get for the autographs by this daring assumption to the texts as we now possess them. I venture to think that this is a little disingenuous. One has also good reason to dislike the harmonistic evasions, put forward to reconcile discrepancies, with a perverted ingenuity, which has at times passed into something too much like dishonesty. But the theory of verbal inspiration renders largely meaningless the function of experience in conveying revelation. Even where the Divine element is dominant it does not obliterate the human. The two factors interact and we cannot draw a sharp line between them or say what part of the composite product is to be credited to one, what part to the other.

People have disputed whether we should say 'the Bible is the Word of God' or 'the Bible contains the Word of God.' The former way of putting it suggests that from beginning to end the Bible was dictated

by the Holy Spirit Himself to selected men who acted as His amanuenses. Nothing in it had a human origin, the book was wholly divine in all its parts. But when this high-sounding theory was brought to the test of its ability to explain the phenomena many felt that it broke down. There was much in Scripture and especially in the Old Testament which it was difficult to believe could be the Word of God. The crude morality, the low spirituality, the defective theology, were difficult to account for on such a view of its origin. Then there was much which was matter of common knowledge, or that men might have found out for themselves, where no exceptional illumination from the Holy Spirit was required. It was all too human a book to be called the Word of God. But since it contained much which might not unfitly be so described the suggestion was put forward that a distinction might be made between the two elements, part could be regarded as the word of man, part as the Word of God. Hence the formula was coined, the Bible is not the Word of God but it contains the Word of God.

We have, I think, passed this stage of the discussion. The antithesis is unreal, the distinction concentrates attention on a false issue. What lies behind it is the old conception of Scripture as mainly a compendium of doctrine and ethics, a view which it may be trusted we have left behind. We do not go to the Bible now to ask at what points God is speaking and at what points it is only man's voice that we hear. We do not say this is inspired, that obviously is not. Such an attitude leads straight to the demand for a selection of elegant extracts and purple patches. What our investigation yields us is a theory which recognizes that the whole Bible is not only greater

than any of its greatest parts, but is not merely the sum total of them taken as disconnected fragments. It is an organic whole and must be judged as such. Then we see that what it discloses to us is the progressive unfolding of God Himself, His gradual self-communication to man. It records the coming of God into human life in an intense and exceptional way. And since the whole is needed to convey the full significance of this self-disclosure and activity, we are quite beyond the state of mind to which the antithesis I have been discussing is a question for real debate, the issue has become irrelevant. There are in the Bible words of God to man, authenticating themselves as such by their intrinsic quality; but these words, Divine in origin, had become part of the consciousness of the human organ before they were framed in speech or committed to writing. There are in the Bible words of man to God; but these words have been prompted by the Holy Spirit; so that just as in God's word to man there is a human element, so there is a Divine element in man's word to God. Hence in the experience of inspiration all the energy does not lie on the Divine side, nor one may even venture to say all the receptivity on the human. In that mingling of God and man each gives and each receives. For while it is true that man can add nothing to God's knowledge or His power, and all that he knows or can achieve is the gift of heaven, yet it is his lofty privilege to respond to the Divine advance. And though there is no self-seeking in God and His love moves out to us and embraces us in its warmth whether we respond or not, yet there must be within Him a wistful yearning for our affection and some thrill of happiness must stir within Him when His love elicits an echo in our heart. And since inspira-

tion is not simply intellectual illumination but is a religious experience in which the Spirit of God flows into the spirit of man, but man's spirit also flows into the Spirit of God, we may dare to say that man gives as well as takes.

In a book of such varied subject-matter as the Bible inspiration might naturally operate in different ways. Where it was a question simply of recording events accessible to research, well within common knowledge, or actually witnessed by the writer, there seems to be no occasion for any exceptional Divine interference. The selection of the incidents might, it is true, appear worthy of Divine superintendence, and even more perhaps the securing of accuracy in the narrative. But an unprejudiced examination of the documents themselves makes it difficult to believe that as a matter of fact, either the selection or the accuracy is guaranteed at all points by inspiration. At the other end of the scale we have many passages where not the content alone but the expression tingles with inspiration, and between the two extremes every grade is probably represented. The Divine invasion was not always at high-water mark. It might differ from age to age, from man to man within the same period, and there would be ebb and flow within the experience even of the same writer. Nor need this occasion any misgiving as to the value of the Bible. For what is really vital is that the Bible as a whole should convey the Divinely intended impression and this it does in the amplest way.

And this brings me to another question which is often raised in this connexion, Whether the inspiration of the great poets, philosophers, or essayists is not of the same order as that which we find in the Bible. We are challenged to justify the exceptional claims we

make for it and to vindicate for it a worth and authority greater than that accorded to all other literature. Why, it is asked, should we place it in a position of such unique significance when it contains much of lower spiritual and moral level than many modern writings? If the devout and serious reader finds in Carlyle or Ruskin, in Tennyson or Browning, a richer nourishment than he can gain from many a page of the Old Testament and some pages of the New, why should he not boldly say that the modern writer has experienced a deeper and fuller inspiration? Is there not really a loftier inspiration in Dante or Spenser, in Shakespeare or Milton? One who is in search of stimulus or knowledge finds that these writers respond to his need. He is kindled and exhilarated or purified and chastened, he is edified and informed, as he reads their words, in a degree which he does not experience when he reads many parts of the Bible. If it be the mark of inspiration to convey that inspiration to others, there are modern prophets whose lips have been touched with the Divine fire. Might not our Canon then be enriched, were we to widen it to include great literature of this inspired quality?

In reply to this I would point out first that the inspiration in these writers is primarily of a secular kind. In Shakespeare it is the inspiration of supreme poetical genius. But the Bible is not in the first instance a collection of literary masterpieces. That it abounds in great literature will be denied by no competent judge, and to this it owes no little of its power. For great literature ennobles our thought and speech, quickens our imagination, controls our life, cheers us in depression, comforts us in trouble, stimulates us in lethargy. The inspiration we find in the Bible is that of supreme religious genius, often

combined, it is true, with a superb gift of expression, but still having its value rather in the fact that it is religious, than that it is great literature. But although it is necessary to draw this distinction between the literary genius in the one and the religious genius in the other, the question is one that could not arise from the point of view which I am expounding. Whoever utters such a challenge makes it plain that he has never understood what the Bible really is. He is trying it by inappropriate standards and bidding it respond to illegitimate tests. If the Bible were an anthology of great but disconnected passages, if it were timeless and abstract, concerned with great ideas fitly expressed, one might feel that many passages in other literatures could appropriately replace the more prosaic and unspiritual pages of Scripture. But when we speak in this manner we make it plain that we are not yet emancipated from the atomistic conception of Scripture, nor have attained to the view of it as a great living whole. Our modern writers are what they are largely through their debt to Scripture. But, leaving aside this derivative character, they have no place in revelation. For one must never forget that it is not the Bible itself which is the supreme revelation but what lies behind the Bible. We naturally think of revelation far too exclusively as something which is conveyed in words as the expression of ideas ; the characteristic outcome of revelation is regarded as doctrine. But this is to miss the deepest element in it. Revelation consists rather in the self-communication of personality, in free intercourse between spirits, in the unfolding of character, in the achievement of deeds. It is in God's impact upon history, in the moulding and controlling of the forces which work within it that the

ultimate revelation has to be sought. It is history rather than the Bible which is the sphere of God's original self-revelation. The content of revelation is not so much truths about God as God Himself. Now everywhere in humanity the Spirit of God is present, but at certain points He works with an intenser energy and burns with a more brilliant illumination. And pre-eminently this is the case with the history which lies behind the Bible. We shall see then that the incomparable and unique value of Scripture does not lie in the fact that it said finer and greater things than are said by the poets, but in the fact that what it says is closely and inseparably connected with a unique and supreme action of God in human history, which culminates in Christ. Our final aim is to understand Christianity, to be assured of its truth, to experience its power. However we may prize our modern prophets and poets, however grateful we may be to them for strengthening our hold on the Gospel and sharpening our insight into it, no one would contend that they are essential to our understanding of the religion. But the Bible is indispensable, not the New Testament alone but also the Old, just because the religion of Israel stood in indissoluble connexion with Christianity.

And this consideration helps us to answer the question whether it would not be better to replace the Bible by an anthology of sacred literature in which the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures would no doubt be largely used, but which would contain copious extracts from the sacred books of other religions. I have seen the question put in this form for example, Would it not be a good thing to read in our Churches the inspired literature of all nations instead of only the sometimes uninspired and sometimes unedifying sacred

literature of the Jews? One might, I suppose, without belittling other religions, reply, the still more often uninspired and still more often unedifying literature of other peoples in their sacred books. If we believe that the Spirit of God was working in the history of Israel in a wholly unique way and with a definite goal in sight, which was attained in Christianity, we must recognize that the Old Testament is an integral part of our religion as the sacred literature of no other nation is or can be. One may have, for example, the warmest and deepest admiration for the Buddha and recognize that the pity for man's wretched lot which inspired him is beyond all our praise. But Buddhism is an atheism rooted in a despairing pessimism. How could one take snippets from its religious literature and stitch them with snippets from the Bible into a crazy patchwork? We can read them for ourselves for what good we can get out of them; but to blend them with the classical documents of our own religion is to lose all sense of historical proportion and to miss entirely the difference which lies between the religions at their root. The question is not whether they are inferior; they proceed on absolutely different lines, they are not founded upon the same principles, nor have they the same views of God or man or human destiny. It is useless to match or combine isolated details. We must look at the tendency of the religions as a whole. We could not by giving their Scriptures a place in the services of our Churches suggest that they stood on the same level or have the same significance as we attach to our own religious literature.

Similarly it might be urged that the Bible would gain much in religious value if it were boldly pruned and edited so as to eliminate those elements which from the Christian standpoint are objectionable or irrelevant.

It is, I suppose, unquestionable that most Christians go by instinct to those portions of the Bible which they find spiritually most profitable, which speak to them immediately with the voice of God. They cannot be blamed for this; yet if the point I am urging is true they cannot confine themselves to these specially congenial portions without serious loss. The passages which they study and assimilate are no doubt of great devotional value; yet by this restriction they miss much which is indispensable to the full devotional use of Scripture. I cannot admit that the neglected passages are really irrelevant. They are there for the sake of the whole. My task is not to advocate the use of the Bible in purple passages, but to defend the value of the whole. And there are many passages that taken by themselves may be completely devoid of devotional worth, which are nevertheless necessary for the comprehension of the whole. Moreover there is a danger that if we guide our reading of Scripture by the principle of selective affinity our religious and moral life may grow one-sided because it misses the corrective which would come from passages not naturally so congenial.

I need, after what I have said, waste no words on the questions which used to be anxiously debated as to the true character and extent of inspiration. That it does not guarantee inerrancy is clear from what has been said, and similarly it is plain that any mechanical theory of verbal dictation is out of the question. Such a theory is disproved by actual discrepancies and the presence of statements the historicity of which is more than doubtful. How little concerned we ought to be is clear from the freedom with which the Old Testament is handled by the writers of the New, and in particular from the fact that some of them not

only quote from the Septuagint where it differs from the Hebrew but base their argument on renderings which yield an entirely different sense. In their arguments from prophecy also they attach meanings to Old Testament passages which a mere reference to the original context shows at once that they did not bear. But these considerations, and such as these, appear pettifogging in the light of the general conception of Scripture which has been here unfolded. We can formulate no hard and fast theory but must content ourselves with recognizing that Scripture is the precipitate of national history and individual experience ; that it was created by the joint action of Divine and human factors ; that no boundary line should be drawn between the two ; that its primary purpose is not to divulge doctrines or lay down moral principles but to bring us into contact with God Himself and disclose His action in revelation and redemption ; that whatever errors be recognized or uncertainties remain we have enough and far more than enough for all our religious and moral needs.

CHAPTER XX

THE MISUSE OF THE BIBLE

Before I approach the question of the permanent value which belongs to the Bible, I may clear the ground by pointing out some things that the Bible is not. And first of all it is not a book of puzzles. We must not degrade that glorious literature into a collection of ingenious conundrums. It was not given to humanity as a whetstone on which it might sharpen its wits by propounding clever guesses in answer to obscure riddles. It was not the Divine intention that we should use the Bible as a picklock to force our way into those secrets of the times and seasons the knowledge of which the Father has reserved to Himself alone. They present a melancholy spectacle who understand so little the true meaning of Scripture that their attention is concentrated on prediction and apocalypse, and who can find nothing better to do with the prophets than construct almanacs of future events out of their writings. Such speculations are intrinsically unprofitable. But even if this were not the case, the Bible is not patient of such a method of interpretation. The prophets were not concerned with a far distant history, and it would be to take our own concerns too seriously to imagine that their gaze was fixed with exceptional keenness of scrutiny on the opening years of the twentieth century after Christ or the changing conditions of the British Empire. And

although there might seem to be more excuse for such study of the apocalypses, yet even Daniel and the Book of Revelation are occupied with the fortunes of Israel or the Christian Church in the immediate future. Besides, these writings form a comparatively small part of Scripture, and those who turn their attention to the seals, the trumpets and the bowls, to the beast, the false prophet, and the little horn, are neglecting what is vital and substantial for the trivial and fanciful. Happily the number of those who are preoccupied with such fantastic investigations is not large, and the suspicion with which a sturdy common sense has always regarded them is abundantly justified by the failure which invariably attends such forecasts. We may trust that the number of cranks and faddists who treat the Bible as a quarry for their own crotchets will steadily diminish.

A worthier treatment is that accorded to it by those who regard it as a manual of politics or sociology. For these subjects at least are not matters of curious and unprofitable speculation, but they vitally concern the well-being of the race, of nations and of individuals. The happiness or misery of vast multitudes is largely conditioned by the social order in which they are forced to live, and the virtues or vices of a community are affected by such conditions in no slight degree. Politics ought to be the expression of moral and religious principles, and to enunciate such principles is a service of real value to the right constitution and just government of society. The Hebrew prophets did not shrink from expressing explicit judgments on social, political and even economic issues. Their writings are still a storehouse of weighty and pungent utterances on these topics. It is precisely this, however, which constitutes the peril of many en-

thusiasts who turn to the pages of prophecy to find for their views the sanction of Holy Writ. It ought not to need pointing out that such a treatment is wholly illegitimate. Obviously what prophets said with reference to a situation which existed in Israel or Judah many centuries before Christ cannot be applied without more ado to the condition of things in England in the twentieth century after Christ. They were dealing with a social and political order entirely different from our own. The whole structure of our society, the intricate machinery of our government would be so remote from their own, so contrary to all their habits of thought and outlook on life as to be barely, if at all, intelligible to them. The prophets are nevertheless of permanent value to the student of sociology, since the validity of the principles which they apply is not affected by changed conditions. But these principles are in their essence moral and spiritual rather than political or economic. The prophets view social conditions under the search-light of ethical and religious truth, and then express their judgment on the situation in which they find themselves. Nor is this all. They put the stress on the spiritual and the ethical. If they sought to reform society their interest came rather from the desire that Israel should be a just and God-fearing people than from any wish to construct an ideal State. They are thus valuable not only because they teach us those principles which we may apply to the solution of our own social problems but for the reminder they give us that the things of the Spirit ought to be accorded the first place.

Once more the Bible is not a manual of science. It is within the memory of most men how the self-appointed champions of faith bitterly assailed the theories of

what they styled science falsely so-called, while the more belligerent representatives of science scornfully disposed of theology as so much belated nonsense. The discussions wearied the judicious with their futility and shocked them by their acrimonious temper. It is true that we have not passed entirely from this era of mutual hostility and contempt, yet the temper is much more admirable and the readiness to discover points of contact and work for a reconciliation has perhaps never been more conspicuous. The story has been sufficiently humiliating to all enlightened lovers of religion. Again and again history has repeated itself. Starting from the principle that Scripture is a court of final appeal on all matters which it touches, the Church has constantly blocked the progress of research by appeals to the Bible. Naturally the Word of God must be preferred to the fallible opinions of men. Keeping itself aloof from the task of investigation the Church constructs its theories, with but little reference to the facts, out of texts of Scripture and the imaginations of speculative theologians. Whenever a man arises, with a talent for observation and research and for deducing laws from the facts that he discovers, and propounds views which are in collision with the accepted doctrine, the Church places him and his views under the ban and if possible forces him to recant. Facts accumulate, however, till the accepted theory snaps under the strain. Then the ecclesiastical authorities give a grudging assent, and it is much if they do not deny that the Church has ever really opposed the theory at all. It is explained that objections have been taken to the irreligious spirit in which results have been put forward or that it is only some vulnerable detail which has occasioned her censure. The last stage is reached when theologians try to show that, so

far from weakening faith, the results attained by science have really strengthened it.

The salient instances are familiar to all. The astronomer who asserted the Copernican theory of the universe, the movement of the earth and its spherical shape, was rebuked as one who set himself up to be wiser than the Holy Spirit. Geology was discredited by a reference to the story of creation in six days ; the theory of evolution is still largely rejected as incompatible with Genesis. Meanwhile investigation goes on. The scientist, assured that whatever else is true or false, his researches may be trusted to give him the knowledge of the facts, meets the charge that his views are unscriptural with the retort that if the claim made for the Bible involves the acceptance of its scientific accuracy, so much the worse for the Bible. History is the surest basis for prediction and he knows quite well how the passionate attack on his results will end, he has seen the humiliating surrender often enough before. Nothing burns lessons into us like experience, but the wise take warning by the experience of others. The past has again and again irresistibly pointed the moral that whenever the Church has stood in the path of scientific advance she has suffered for it. Her truest friends have warned her not to commit intellectual suicide or climb down at ruinous cost of influence and prestige from a position she has unwarrantably assumed, or to repeat the ignominious blunders previously made in the case of astronomy, geology or other sciences. We must be jealous of all attempts to gag research in the name of theology such scores accumulate at compound interest. To urge theological objections against a scientific hypothesis is disloyal to science and puts an unbearable strain on the authority of religion. Nor can we tolerate

any fettering of research by dictation of the result it must be made to reach. Investigation must be free in spirit, rigorous in method, and honest in aim.

When we think of the marvellous advances made by science, since its domination by theology has been broken, we cannot help reflecting how great the advance might have been if human progress had not been checked in the name of religion. Centuries ago men might have enjoyed the advantages which we possess to-day, and we might have been enjoying what will be reached centuries later than our time. Few things compromise the Church more seriously or shake her authority more deeply than attempts to settle scientific questions by theological arguments. The battle of faith is hard enough without such gratuitous complications. We have every reason to congratulate ourselves on the wide acceptance of the principle that the Bible was not given to teach us science, and does not tie our hands or make it impossible for those who recognize the validity of scientific results to accept its authority in its own sphere. Its utterances on such questions are of a popular character and in harmony with the naïve conceptions of the pre-scientific period. It would be unreasonable to expect anything else. Those who are concerned with such problems as the reconciliation of Genesis with geology or the incompatibility with physical science of the Creation and Flood stories might have spared themselves much labour and perplexity if they had once grasped the true functions of Scripture. When the main concern was with religion and morality it could only have occasioned a gratuitous difficulty if to a people in that stage of culture the story of Creation had been told with scientific precision. Or will any one urge that it would have been educationally sound to dis-

tract attention from the essential to the irrelevant and largely unintelligible? Nor is it the Divine way to teach men those truths which they can discover for themselves or to anticipate by premature disclosures the slow movement of research.

Happily from the trivialities which formerly filled so large a part in the debate we have passed on to more essential issues. And the outcome is that many are already grasping in a higher unity those conceptions of the universe which on the lower plane seem so antagonistic. The theologian has come to look calmly and without panic on the advance of science, just because on the one side he is so sure of his ground, and on the other he knows that in the nature of things the inexorable limitations of science preclude a conflict on vital issues. Rather he now regards it as a valuable ally. In one respect it has powerfully reinforced religion. The possibility of science is a powerful argument for the existence of God. Science, it is sometimes said, has destroyed the very basis of Theism. But the most important thing is not that science should assert this view or that, but that there should be such a thing as science at all. The very existence of science testifies to a rational order in the universe. It rests upon an axiom, which is that nature is intelligible, that it is not a chaos but an ordered whole. When, therefore, the scientist comes to study it he does so with the conviction that it can be interpreted. But this conviction implies that it has meaning, and that the closest study of its phenomena will reveal to him the laws which control it. Now, what speaks to the mind with meaning cannot itself be independent of mind in its origin. If we take up a book and begin to read it, we can argue infallibly from the fact that it conveys a definite meaning to our mind, that a mind like our own created

it. And so the fact that nature speaks to our thought in language it can understand proves that it is itself a product of thought. Thought has gone to the making of the universe. For what else can the fact that it speaks to thought in us mean, but that there is an intellectual element in it? Thought cannot interpret the unmeaning, the capricious, the irrational. But if our search discloses to us that which thought can interpret, we are confident that in Nature thought is to be found. Nature itself, therefore, points to a thinker for its author. And science has powerfully reinforced Theism, for the very existence of science is due to faith in the reasonableness of the universe. There is no truer description of the scientist than this, that he thinks the thoughts of God after Him. Accordingly, that which makes science possible is itself a proof of the existence of God.

It may be worth while pointing out in a sentence or two that so far as religion rests on a historical basis it is unaffected by physical science. It is not in its province but in that of criticism to pronounce on the historical character of an alleged fact. Since Christianity rests on alleged facts the conflict of our faith must ultimately be decided by the critic. Here the competent critic is in court and the incompetent scientist, however brilliant in his own department, is not.

It is well for us to remember two facts in this connexion. One is that scientific discovery is advancing at a tremendous rate, and the other is that scientific opinion is undergoing rapid transformations. We might take the more recent investigations into the nature of matter as illustrating the former, and the far-reaching changes in the theory of evolution as illustrating the latter. Any one, for example, who

looks at the tabular comparison of the Darwinian and post-Darwinian theories given by Korschinsky, and reproduced in a form accessible to English readers in Orr's *God's Image in Man*, Foster's *Finality of the Christian Religion* and Otto's *Naturalism and Religion*, will recognize how necessary it is for the non-specialist to maintain an attitude of reserve in this matter. Some theory of evolution is probably true, but it is quite possible that the forms which are now most favoured may be proved by subsequent investigations to be as inadequate as those that have preceded them. And in the nature of the case science cannot do the work of philosophy. In her own sphere she is mistress, but when she sets up to explain the universe in its widest sense she loses all title to consideration.

The mischief which a false view of Scripture might entail is seen with exceptional clearness in the treatment of those who were supposed to be guilty of witchcraft. This was denounced as a sin, both in the Old Testament and in the New, and the Law prescribed death as its penalty. It is not of course fair to lay to the account of the Bible the hideous atrocities which were perpetrated in the trials for witchcraft. The story of religious persecution is ghastly enough, yet it is possible that far more suffering was caused by trials for witchcraft than by trials for heresy. Not only were those suspected subjected to torture, but no limit was placed to the torture inflicted. For the theology which asserted the fact that men and women sold themselves to the devil drew the natural theological inference that the devil would supply his servants with supernatural strength to endure the torture, and therefore, the limits which were observed in other cases were not observed here. Tortures of the most fiendish description were applied until the poor victims incrimin-

ated themselves and others. Their evidence was received as conclusive, and the new victims thus accused were similarly forced by the most exquisite and persistent torture to confess and accuse others. Then the evidence thus wrung from them in a frenzy of pain was regarded as giving a true account of witchcraft. In this way a kind of science of witchcraft was compiled out of these confessions, which were corroborated by thousands who confessed anything and everything the authorities desired, that they might have a respite from the cruelties they were enduring. That the development of knowledge should have been held up for centuries in the name of religion is deplorable enough; but less deplorable than that so many victims of superstition should have suffered agonies, which fill us to-day with horror and unavailing sympathy, though long centuries have passed since from the ruthlessness of man they escaped to the healing pity of God. The responsibility does not lie so much with the Bible as with the misuse of it. Witchcraft was evil in intention and it was inimical to the stability of the State, and therefore as an anti-social practice deserved a severe penalty. Even in modern times the death penalty in itself, though from our point of view outrageous, was all of a piece with the hideous brutality of the criminal code and much less indefensible for this offence than for many others. Torture and the stake were also only too normal incidents in the administration of the law. Possibly even had witchcraft never been mentioned in the Bible it might have made little difference. The selling of oneself to Satan would always have seemed sin and blasphemy of the darkest hue, dangerous to society, high-handed defiance to God. The prosecutions reveal the most pitiable mixture of superstition, credulity, and self-protection in a

panic, of blind prejudice and unreasoning fanaticism. But it cannot be denied that their promoters firmly believed that they had the warrant of Holy Writ.

Still more disgraceful was the defence of slavery by appeal to the Bible. That Noah's curse on Canaan, that is to say the Canaanites, could have been quoted as a justification for the enslavement of negroes would have seemed incredible had it not been the stock argument from Scripture. That the exquisite letter from Paul to Philemon in which he sent back his escaped slave Onesimus, "no longer as a slave but a brother beloved," should have been alleged as a warrant for sending back fugitive slaves to a life often worse than death, will remain an indelible blot on the fair fame of those who from the vantage ground of the Christian pulpit defended this masterpiece of Satan. Yet it remains true that the Old Testament recognized and legislated for slavery as a legitimate institution. It is also true, however, that slavery meant something very different from what we understand by the term; that the tendency of Hebrew legislation was towards greater humanity and justice in the treatment of slaves; and that their interests were guarded in those unenlightened days in a way which might well have caused Christian legislators in the last century to blush for shame. And I need not linger to point out how assassination, lying, wars of extermination, forced conversions, religious persecution have found their apologists with misused passages from the Bible on their lips. The New Testament is indeed so plain that these misconceptions are inexcusable.

Abundant mischief has been wrought by the practice of building proofs upon isolated texts. This has come to light in what has been said already with reference to slavery, where an institution which was a radical

contradiction of the spirit of the Gospel was defended by an entirely irrelevant Old Testament text. Those who have any ear for the teaching of history know what erroneous inferences have been derived from Scripture in this way. The futility of the method is demonstrated by the completely divergent results which are reached. Each faction has its own array of favourite texts, and they value Scripture largely because it is an armoury for their own favourite views. They read the New Testament with a scheme of theology in their heads. When they come across the passages quoted on the opposite side they either force them into harmony with their scheme by violent exegesis or their sensitiveness to the natural meaning is so benumbed by their prepossessions that they are not conscious of any difficulty at all. But their opponents have developed an abnormal sensitiveness for just these passages and quote them with gusto and confidence as completely guaranteeing their view. Those who are familiar with the history of exegesis of this partisan type are not likely to be much impressed by this method of proof; still less will those be impressed by it who have had much experience in exegetical work. They know only too well the extreme difficulty and delicacy of the task. No doubt there are questions where a fair measure of confidence is not out of place, but on the whole the commentator becomes more and more diffident, more and more ready to admit that the arguments for different views are very evenly balanced, and that no confident decision is really attainable. He grows more and more alive to the difficulties and complexities of his task, to the need for a large induction on which to base his conclusions. He understands how necessary it is for him to trace carefully the history of the terms which he has to interpret, to study the

whole system of his author in order that the detail may be rightly understood through the general and fitted into its place in the whole. He shrinks from off-hand judgments and superficial impressions, knowing how liable he is to be misled by them. And even with all these precautions against errors he knows only too well how easy it is for him not to hit the truth. The commentator has missed much of the moral blessing that should come to him from his work if he has not learnt many lessons of humility and self-distrust. Let no one fondly imagine that the interpretation of Scripture is an easy task. It is one that demands from all who would undertake it the best equipment of knowledge and spiritual insight, the most scrupulous regard for truth, the most patient and exacting toil.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BIBLE AND THEOLOGY

The principle for which I have been contending that the Bible is not primarily a manual of theology is not incompatible with a firm belief in the necessity for theology. It cannot of course be doubted that doctrine is viewed in many quarters with indifference or open hostility, the outcry against it is loud and violent, and the demand for an ethical Gospel is constantly ringing in our ears. Partly this is owing to an unduly narrow view of Systematic Theology, as though it implied a system in which everything was defined with the minutest precision and the whole structure with all its details was framed with cast-iron rigidity. Against anything so lifeless and inflexible it is no wonder that men revolt. Some no doubt denounce theology because they dislike clear thinking on matters of religion or perhaps are incapable of it. With the former feeling I sympathize to this extent that there ought to be some room left for mystery, a truth which dogmatic theologians too frequently forget. There is such a thing as pushing inquiry and definition into regions where it verges on the profane, and the world has not been without examples to point this moral. This is no argument against the legitimacy of Systematic Theology but merely against carrying it to an extreme. But on the general question it need only be said that the choice is between good and bad thinking not between theology and no theology at all. We are so consti-

tuted that assuming we have a religion it is impossible for us to avoid theology. We cannot take one step in religion without giving implicit assent to some theological idea, and however important feeling may be in the religious consciousness, and for myself it is the essential core of it, unless thought be present it remains a vague emotion without either ethical or spiritual worth. But if thought be indispensable to any worthy religion we cannot be content without a rational interpretation of our spiritual experience, and this Systematic Theology gives us.

It would, indeed, be otherwise if it were true that religion, once the unchallenged arbiter of human life and for ever the supreme satisfaction of the soul, was so much on the wane that the question had become urgent, what barriers should be erected in its place to restrain the surging flood of licence that threatens to overwhelm civilization. But those of us who are persuaded that religion must be a permanent factor in human life need have no misgiving as to the permanence of theology. When writers praise religion at the expense of theology they may be doing a needed piece of work, but it is so easy in the interests of religion to reject as mere theology that without which the religion itself cannot permanently live. Sometimes, moreover, theology is attacked for what might better be put down to the score of bigotry or something that would be more fitly charged against philosophy. And in view of the close relation between our opinions and our character and conduct we may confidently hold that the maintenance of theology is valuable not for religion alone but for morality. That preachers should take the great Christian doctrines and exhibit them, not in a dry and abstruse way but as forms of living truth with an intensely real relation to practical life,

is one of the secrets of a solid and successful ministry. This is all the more the case when the sermons contain a wealth of theological ideas which are no mere reproduction of technical dogmatics expressed in conventional and stereotyped formulæ, but the freshly minted thoughts of an independent thinker who has had a deep and original religious experience. In particular, a fuller dogmatic element should enter into the training not, to be sure, of children, but of young people. Their hold on Christian truth is frequently less strong than could be wished because care has not been taken to present it in an ordered form and forestall attacks which may be made upon it.

At the same time I do earnestly desire to guard myself against the misconception that I regard salvation as dependent on the profession of an accurate creed. Since experience teaches me that this position is still hotly contested, I may be pardoned for what may seem to be a digression in explanation of my attitude. I agree with those who adopt this view, in holding that an intellectual apprehension of the truths of the Gospel is much to be desired; but I repudiate the position which finds one of its best known expressions in the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed. If they say that they join with me in that repudiation I am afraid they cannot be let off so easily; for if we insist on intellectual orthodoxy as the indispensable condition of salvation we are on a slippery slope which will carry us perhaps further than we should care to go. James tells us that the devils believe and shudder, and Milton's description of these paragons of orthodoxy, discussing the problems of fate, foreknowledge, and free-will reminds us of some later theologians. Those who have ever tried to think out to its last issues what they mean by the words 'Divinity

of Christ' will perhaps understand what I mean. They will realize how extremely intricate are the problems and how difficult it is to define the doctrine without falling into error on this side or on that. Often the path narrows to a razor edge, along which only the most skilful balancing can conduct us safely. When we speak of the Divinity of Christ we have first of all to define our idea of God. The need of this may not at first seem obvious, but it becomes clear when we reach the point of determining in what sense a Divine Being can become incarnate, accepting the conditions of a genuine human life and yet not parting with the essential attributes of His pre-incarnate state. Are we to lay stress on such qualities as omnipotence, omniscience, immateriality, and impassibility? or is our emphasis to be placed on the ethical and spiritual qualities, the love and the holiness of God? What is it, in other words, that makes God to be God? Are we to thrust into prominence the metaphysical or the moral and spiritual aspects of Divinity?

Next we have to raise the question of the constitution of the Godhead, which, as expressed in the Catholic faith, confesses God as a Trinity in Unity. In this section of our investigation we have to face the question whether we should interpret the Trinity as economical or essential. Are we to say that God eternally exists as a Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit? or are we to say that this is the aspect in which He manifests Himself to mankind in creation, revelation and redemption? If we assert the essential Trinity, as I think we should, then our narrow path becomes a razor edge indeed, for how are we to devise such a statement of the doctrine as to avoid tritheism on the one hand, and Sabellianism on the other? How secure at once the plurality and the unity? What form of words

may we rightly adopt which shall express the truth with precision and with fulness? Obviously there is no form of words that can perfectly serve our purpose, for words are the precipitate of human experience, and we have nothing in our consciousness or our social relations which stands in the same category as the eternal life of God. Any words that we use to define the doctrine must in the nature of the case be inadequate, and to a certain extent misleading. We speak of three Persons in one God, but the sense in which the term 'Person' is here used has nothing to correspond to it in the range of our experience.

Then we have the difficult question as to the distribution of the attributes of God among the Persons of the Godhead. How far we can say that the differentiating attributes of each are shared by the others in virtue of their mutual indwelling, is a problem of some moment when we come to consider the conditions of the Incarnation.

But our difficulties hardly lessen when we move onward to the next point, and that is the jungle of questions which have grown up about the doctrine of the Incarnation. Here we are dealing with the union of two factors, neither of which we understand in their separation, except very imperfectly. Recent psychology has driven home to us how little we know of the mystery of our own personality. Below the thin jet of consciousness we have learnt to recognize that dim and ill-explored region of the subconscious and unconscious within us. And if the mystery of our own personality almost completely baffles us, who will have the hardihood to pretend that he understands the personality of God? But the problem of the Incarnation is even more difficult, for how, out of these two factors, is the third produced? What are the conditions of His

being? What surrender and mutual accommodation did the union demand? Was the union effected in a moment, or did it take the form of a process? What was the relation of the Incarnate Christ to the cosmic functions of the Son of God? How was the life of the Godhead affected by the entrance of the Son into the conditions of humanity, and again by His return to the Father? Whether the personality resided in the human or in the Divine nature, or in the blending of both; whether there was a communication of properties from one nature to the other, are other questions involved, which must be satisfactorily answered before the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ can be adequately understood or explained. We should have to pass in review the theories that were considered by the Councils; to make up our mind on the Apollinarian, the Nestorian, and the Eutychian controversies, and come to a decision on Monophysite and Monothelite opinions. Nor even then would our quest be over, for we should have to face the abstruse issues presented by the Lutheran doctrine of the Communicatio Idiomatum, forced upon the Lutheran Church by Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper with the ubiquity of Christ's body as its corollary. And then we should have to confront all the questions concerning the Kenosis. Nor would our weary pilgrimage be even now at an end, for we should still have to come to a conclusion on the interpretation of the Divinity of Christ given by Ritschl and his school.

But those whose attitude I am criticising may say, long before they reach this point, that I am caricaturing their views, that they do not suppose that a man needs to be a finished theologian before he can be saved, But that is only because they are so much under the influence of the modern intellectual atmosphere, and

of our own evangelistic practice that they do not hold the views they profess with due seriousness. For it is a simple matter of fact that all the questions I have enumerated spring directly out of and are involved in the statement 'I believe in the Divinity of Christ.' Speculative theology is an exacting master, and if we decide to go with him one mile he will make us go twenty. If they appeal to Cæsar, to Cæsar they must go. Naturally when they have to deal with a penitent with the question on his lips 'What shall I do to be saved?' they do not begin by catechising him as to whether he is sound on the doctrine of the Trinity, and understands its intricate mysteries, or whether he can pass a satisfactory examination in all the heresies of the fourth and fifth centuries. They probably enter very little into theology at all. What they are concerned with is the practical problem of bringing God and the human soul together, not an easy enterprise always by any means, and one not likely to be easier if it is complicated with elaborate discussion of speculative dogmatics. But that is because their practice has much more sanity than their theory. They are the anæmic survivors of a more robust race. Even to-day in great Christian Churches it is not a mere belief in the Divinity of Christ that is, formally at least, required as the intellectual condition of salvation, but an accurate acquaintance with, and a hearty belief in the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. We are all familiar with the elaborate theological refinements of the Athanasian Creed. Probably many believers in the orthodox doctrines of the Godhead and the Divinity of Christ have felt inclined to scoff at it. Yet it is the outcome of the elaborate controversies in which many of the most powerful and subtle intellects the Christian Church has ever possessed battled

together to secure the truth. And now let me quote the well-known opening clause of that creed: 'Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholick Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.' And after the very elaborate doctrines have been set forth the Creed concludes, 'This is the Catholick Faith: Which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.' And I may observe that the necessity for right belief in these matters is more than once asserted in the body of the Creed as the following quotations show: 'He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Those who put forward this Creed understood perfectly well what they were about, they shared the belief that every one must perish everlastingly unless he confessed the Divinity of Christ. Only they were sufficiently consistent to see that this involved a great deal more than many of their more modern representatives would be willing to admit. Once we make intellectual assent to a creed an indispensable condition of salvation we are driven by the logic of the situation to define that creed in detail, and to express an authoritative opinion upon the numerous difficulties involved. Saving faith, however, thank God, is not belief about Jesus, but trust in Him.

Now I not only admit, but I emphasize the fact that trust in Him does raise questions of a speculative character. I hold very strongly the great importance of theology, the sound and accurate definition of the truths concerning God, Christ, and salvation. But I entirely refuse to believe that God will send men to

hell for want of it. This would be hard in the first place on those who have not the intellectual capacity for such inquiries, but who feel that the acceptance of a proposition which they do not understand save in the most superficial way is unsatisfactory. Moreover, if we are rigorously logical in our theology—and I must insist that those who take the opposite view shall be rigorously logical—we shall be obliged to think of the heathen, as the old theologians did without scruple, and of all who die in infancy before they are capable of understanding the proposition, 'Jesus is the Son of God!' as incapable of salvation. The Christian Church, it is true, has for the most part modified its demand for a particular belief about God and Christ in the latter instance, by asserting the salvation of infants who had been baptised; but that was because baptism was supposed to be on the one hand an indispensable, but on the other an efficacious instrument of regeneration. Of course I do not suppose for one moment that those who insist on the necessity of orthodoxy for salvation, hold the horrible doctrines I have mentioned, but these are involved in the logic of their position, and they must either move forward to them or retreat from the position they have taken. It is, indeed, not so long since the appeal used to ring out on missionary platforms that the heathen were dropping into hell at the rate of sixty a minute, because the Church had not sent the Gospel to them. Now, people have come to understand that such a belief is like dynamite in the heart of Christianity itself, contradicting in its blood-curdling brutality the very basis on which Christianity reposes, the love of God and His universal Fatherhood.

Returning now to the question of the Reconstruction of Theology, I would point out that an adequate

doctrine will probably be reached only when we combine contributions from different types of mind. We all have our limitations—in many respects very severe limitations—and it is folly to suppose that the truth of God is exhausted by what happens to commend itself to the individual temperament of any one of us. We have constantly to be on our guard against rejecting things as untrue because they are not congenial to us. There are theologians who see what appeals to them with remarkable clearness, and express it with great cogency, who scornfully deny the existence of other sides of truth because their limited vision cannot take it in. When a particular presentation of truth has won the acceptance of a very large number of people, it is more modest for us to admit that it probably contains an element of truth than to deny its right to be because it does not touch any responsive chord in our own being. Accordingly, we ought to welcome contributions to our subject from all points of view. We should not be so anxious for people to talk our own dialect as for them to say with decision and force what seems to them to be true. It may be extravagant and one-sided, but these difficulties will be pruned away in the ultimate statement. What we want above all is that the Church should give a full testimony, and we should, therefore, encourage the utmost freedom of expression lest we stifle the voice of the Spirit by imposing on our brethren an unworthy dread. There will always be plenty to criticize crudity and lack of balance, and we ought to believe so much in truth as to encourage the frankest utterance of all sorts of opinion. The risks of utterance, no doubt, are real, but the risks of repression are more fatal still. I therefore welcome every sincere attempt to grapple with the great and deep problems of theology. I am

so convinced of its importance, and at the same time so sensitive to the difficulties of constructing a satisfactory system, that I am eager for every ray of light. I may find myself quite out of harmony with the main current of a writer's thought, but it will be a strange thing, granted that he has thought at all earnestly on the subject, if he has not something to say which casts light on its dark places.

Systematic theologians had formerly an easier task. They had already at hand their formal sources in Scripture, ecclesiastical decisions, authoritative statements by recognized theologians. The stability of the foundations was unquestioned, the lines within which thought might move freely were rigidly determined. But whether we like it or not, we are forced to recognize that the old method is no longer adequate. We do not mean necessarily that it is superseded, for there are still many whose need it suits, and who do not quarrel with the dogmatic character of its assumptions. But there are many now to whom theology, if it is to appeal at all, must appeal on different terms. They are in no mood to take things on trust, and the older type of apologetic does not command their assent. For their sake some attempt is necessary to state the truths of Christianity in a form to win their allegiance.

A word must suffice on the regulative principle in the construction. Theology is a highly developed organism of which it is true that if one member is affected, the whole body must be affected with it. And this applies especially to the fundamental doctrine. But what should this doctrine be? If, as some would have us do, we construct our system entirely according to man's nature and needs, certain things will get no natural place in it which ought not to be

excluded. The material source should be, as Calvin rightly saw, the doctrine of God. Only instead of thinking of God primarily as Sovereign Will we must go back again to the Gospels, take the experience of Christ as our point of departure and learn from Him that decisive conception of God which has to control the whole statement of Theology. What was central and fundamental to Him who knew God as no one else has known Him must be central and fundamental to us. The dominating conception must be that of the Fatherhood of God and its acceptance will profoundly modify the theological construction in all its parts. It may, of course, be said that the question as to the lines on which a system should be worked out is purely technical and has no necessary reference to the actual content. But while the doctrines expounded may in each case be the same, the perspective and the proportion are likely to be different, and these are best preserved by making the doctrine of God the controlling principle.

Passing on to the principles and method which must be followed in the construction itself, it may be most convenient to begin with a summary statement and then return to expand it in fuller detail. The scientific exposition of any Christian doctrine is the outcome of a long series of special and often complicated investigations. First of all, the Biblical student must trace the development in the Old Testament. He must then examine the movement of Jewish thought, so far as that can be recovered, in the interval between the close of the Old Testament and the rise of Christianity. Thus he will form an estimate as to the contribution taken over by Christianity from its predecessors. Next he has to study the New Testament writers each for himself in independence of the rest.

He must, if necessary, watch for signs of advance in the thought of the writer, and in particular he must inquire into the sources of his teaching and his relation to his environment. It makes a considerable difference in interpretation if we decide that a writer was mainly influenced by Hebrew or by Greek thought. Then when the individual contributions which the New Testament contains have been discovered, they must be brought together, compared, and woven so far as may be possible into a coherent and connected whole. The task is next to be handed over to the historian of doctrine, that he may follow the development through all its varied forms down the Christian centuries. He must observe how foreign influences have played upon it, have shaped its form or changed its substance. The psychologist has then to investigate the experience of which the doctrine professes to give an account. The material on which he works will be supplied by those who are intimately familiar with that experience as they have observed it in others ; or better still, as they have realized it in themselves. And then the systematic theologian must take up the results of all these lines of inquiry and combine them into a statement which shall do justice to them all, which shall seize the essential and eternal truth, disengaging it from obsolete forms of expression. He will not forget that even in the classical documents of Christianity the influence of current modes of thought is often to be detected in the garb with which they have clothed great Christian realities. And while he will not force the great Christian truths into philosophical moulds which are inadequate vehicles for them, remembering that philosophies themselves change, he will seek to relate his presentation of the doctrine to the best thought of his time. But he

will also not forget that much which has passed for orthodox theology has been created by the application of ancient philosophy to timeless Christian truth. For such a restatement of doctrine I believe that the time has not yet come. What is meanwhile desirable is that from varied points of view competently equipped scholars should push on with the preliminary studies and with tentative reconstruction of the doctrine itself.

From this general statement I pass on to a more detailed discussion. In the construction of Christian Theology we have to take account of elements which are not, as well as of elements which are, definitely Christian. In the first place it is quite obvious that philosophy will have much to say on theological questions. It has often been remarked that the fundamental questions of theology are really settled before we get to theology at all; in other words, our general view of the universe pledges us to take this or that side on questions of theology. If we are consistent and logical thinkers the position we adopt in metaphysics determines in many respects the point of view from which we construct theology. It is therefore desirable that those who wish to come to an understanding of the problems should be clear as to their first principles. It is wonderful, indeed, how many logical inconsistencies can dwell together in the same mind, but in the long run the inconsistency is likely to force itself into prominence, and a readjustment be made necessary.

It may be said that as a matter of fact theology has often been independent of metaphysics, and that such an independence is the watchword of an important school in Germany to-day. But an influence is not the less powerful because we are unconscious of

the sway it exercises over us ; and it is possible to ban metaphysics on metaphysical grounds. Personally, I have never been able to see how theology can dispense with philosophy. It is clear, however, that philosophies change, and the change is bound to affect theology. This has been proved abundantly throughout its history. Our own philosophy, whether implicitly or explicitly held, is inevitably influenced very considerably by the intellectual atmosphere of our time. The spirit of the age in which we live is something from which we cannot escape, and even if we set ourselves in antagonism to it, its subtle, all-pervasive influence moulds us in spite of ourselves. Yet the history of philosophy warns us that whatever view we may adopt is likely to be superseded by a later age. And the result of this is, that while our theology may enshrine the imperishable truth, the systematic form in which we expound it must in the nature of things have a temporary element in it. We cannot escape from it, but we have to recognize its provisional character.

Further, a special place must be assigned to psychology. Investigations and expositions such as we find in Granger's *Soul of a Christian*, in Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*, and in James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, open out a most important field of study. If we are to be theologians, we must understand the religious instinct in its manifold types, the course of its development, the methods of its satisfaction. This is a comparatively new field of study, and much remains to be done before it can be regarded as having achieved very definite results. Yet the analysis of the various types of religious personality and of the corresponding types of religion evolved, ought to supply the theologian, not only with valuable raw material, but with important practical tests for

the correctness of his theories. Once more, the theologian needs to take into account the non-Christian manifestations of religion. Much will become clearer to him as his studies in this department proceed, and he will be the better able to appreciate the intrinsic nature of religion, and will see how many of the problems that confront him in Christian Theology have previously emerged on non-Christian soil. He will appreciate all the more deeply the unique success of Christianity when he becomes familiar with the less satisfactory solutions reached by other religions.

Now, it is clear that the great system-builders of the past were not in the same favourable conditions in many of these respects as we are to-day. So far as the psychology of religion was concerned, it is true that important material had been collected ; the Confessions of Augustine, for instance, yield many brilliant examples of keen self-analysis ; but there was nothing corresponding to the careful collection of cases with a view to the formation of theories with which we are now beginning to become familiar. Philosophy, too, as I have said, has always had a very vital relation to theology. But philosophy is, and must be, something different from what it was to them, something, let us hope, more adequately reflecting the ultimate truth of things. And as for the science of Comparative Religion, that did not exist for them. In the modern study of the subject the theologian has been provided with a very rich mine of material.

But while all this is true about the non-Christian contribution to theology, it is true also of the definitely Christian elements. Here Scripture is the most important source, and in the study of Scripture pre-eminently we have advanced far beyond the position held by the great theologians of the past. In the first place we have

to reckon with the modern critical movement. And as an outcome of it we are in a far more favourable position for understanding the classical documents of our religion than theologians have been in any previous age. It would be melancholy to think that more than a century's study of the Scriptures by a host of trained and earnest scholars had been in vain. Criticism has not been the mere following of a will-o'-the-wisp; through many mistakes and failures it has achieved numerous results, which are not likely to be set aside. We cannot therefore employ the classics of our faith in the same way in which the older theologians employed them. We must, if we are to be faithful to truth, see that the new knowledge as well as the old comes to its rights.

I have myself no doubt that the apologetic position has been much strengthened by the critical movement. There is such a thing as an unbelieving criticism; but criticism is also in many instances joined with the most strenuous faith. And it is plain that when criticism has completed its work the documents remain. They are placed in different order, they are assigned to different dates, our views of authorship are in many instances changed, but none of these things destroy the documents for us or nullify the revelation which they enshrine. And criticism has made plain how much more diffused was the spirit of revelation than we have been in the habit of supposing. Now, out of the critical movement has come a new conception of the development of the religion of Israel. It is a marvellous story, and one which makes the reality of Divine action even more impressive than we had realized it to be. And in connexion with this I have especially to notice the rise of the science of Biblical Theology. It ought to be

a commonplace that Systematic Theology should be founded on Biblical Theology. But in many instances the Bible has been viewed rather as an arsenal of texts by which doctrines may be proved, than as a source from which theology is directly to be constructed. From the point of view of scientific theology a great objection to this is its indiscriminate character. The various parts of the Bible were placed on the same level not simply in the authority with which they spoke, but also in the thoughts which they were believed to express. A more careful study of the Bible has shown to us a more excellent way. We recognize that there was a Divine purpose in the method which was actually followed. That the process of revelation stretched over so many centuries, and that the message was uttered through such different types of personality has for us a real significance. We recognize that an indiscriminate employment of certain parts of Scripture involves a blindness to the method which the Spirit of God actually pursued. It follows, therefore, that we must study in the first instance each author for himself, apprehend his individual message in its historical context, for it is not without meaning that the various Biblical writers came when they did. We fully understand that it is illegitimate to quote passages of Scripture without reference to their context, inasmuch as that modifies in many instances the sense to be imposed upon them. But this principle has a wider application. Just as we cannot quote the individual passage without its context, so we need to place the author himself in what I may call his historical context. In other words, we have to recognize that a vital element in revelation is its relevance to its own time. There is much that will be misunderstood if this caution is not borne in mind. There is a great deal in the

Old Testament which is not of permanent significance. And here I refer, not simply to the Law, which has always been recognized on its ceremonial side to have no more than a temporary validity. The same thing is true of much in the prophets. When we read the burning utterances of Amos and Isaiah upon the social evils of their time, it needs but little reflection to see that we cannot apply those utterances to the conditions of our own day. Land-grabbing and estate-hunger may be things to be reprobated, but we cannot quote Isaiah's denunciation of those who add house to house and field to field as if it had any bearing whatever upon the question, until we are sure that the principle which found expression in that denunciation is also violated in our own time. It is plain that a prophetic message, which was relevant to the conditions of Palestine in the eighth century B.C., may be utterly irrelevant to the conditions of England in the twentieth century A.D. The eternal element lies in the principles, not in their application, and we have to discover what those principles were, through an understanding of the circumstances of the time (see pp. 409 f.). Now, the relevance of Scripture to its own age involves as another conclusion a recognition of the fact that the same utterance may bear a different significance at one time from what it possesses at another. We have to read the revelation through the historical conditions, and for this it is necessary to understand what those conditions were. Since it is criticism alone which can determine questions of date and authorship and structure, it is clear that the critical movement is bound to modify in many respects time-honoured interpretations.

Biblical Theology should be the foundation of Systematic. This does not mean that an indiscriminate collection of Biblical statements should be made on

any particular topic, and the conglomerate thus created be regarded as the Biblical teaching on that subject. Each writer must be kept distinct, and the individual system so far as possible constructed. Only when this has been done can these systems be compared and built into a coherent whole. Thus we need to reconstruct the theological system of Paul without any reference to the teaching of John. To make an indiscriminate amalgam of both, and call it New Testament Theology, is to do justice to neither. And it is especially important to remember this in the matter of terminology. A Biblical writer has often his own specific vocabulary, which differs widely from that of another writer. This is pre-eminently the case with Paul, and it is accordingly very precarious to argue from his terminology to the interpretation of other writers. One might take, for example, his conception of the flesh, which is peculiarly his own ; or one might quote the great difference between his use of the word ' faith ' and that which we find in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Another science which was largely the creation of the last century is the History of Doctrine. According to the various theological circles in which we have been brought up, we most of us start life with a certain theological outfit, which we identify with Christianity ; and our tendency is to read this theological system into the New Testament. We may be right in so doing in the main, but it is a far cry from the twentieth century to the first, and we have to face the question whether our own point of view does coincide so exactly with that of the New Testament. And the problem becomes much more urgent when we find that other types, equally with our own, claim identity with primitive Christianity. Now, here the History of Doctrine has

much to tell us. The subject is so important because it is hard to understand a theological system aright apart from a knowledge of its history. The tendency to forget this is responsible for much misapprehension as to the meaning of certain theological propositions. They have a history and cannot be rightly understood apart from it. Indeed, it may be said to be an axiom in scientific research of all kinds, that the historical is the sound method, where it is practicable to employ it. The theology of our own time in all its varying shapes has a very long history behind it ; it has never sprung full-grown from the brain of any thinker, nor, indeed, has any thinker derived it straight from the pages of Scripture. We might jump off our own shadow as readily as cut ourselves loose from the ubiquitous past. But if we cannot escape from the past we can assimilate it and so turn it to account, find in it the material for a worthier construction. And we can learn how to build better. We can see what lines of thought end in disappointment, which give promise of fruitful result, what pitfalls to avoid, what paths to follow. Experience is the great teacher, and history is systematized experience.

Few things can form a better preparation for the true appreciation of the worth of a doctrine than to trace it in its history, to note how point after point has been the subject of thorough discussion, and why the doctrine has assumed the form in which it is held by the Church. It might seem that many of those whose views are discussed in the Histories of Doctrine might have been suffered still to sleep in their obscurity, with the dust of ages undisturbed. Of what concern to us in the twentieth century it may be asked, is it to turn from the urgent duties which lie all about us and busy ourselves with long extinct controversies and

speculations which centuries since have been relegated to limbo? Why should the historian delve assiduously in the records of obscure sects, or track the intricate windings of underground streams of speculation and experience? The value of such a study lies in this—that these controversies are by no means extinct, but are matters of pressing moment. There is much, for example, in our present religious situation to recall the pantheistic mysticism which was in danger of denying the gravity, and even the reality, of sin. The old forms may have perished, the old phraseology may have become obsolete, but the speculative impulse abides, the essential theory continually tends to re-appear. One of the perils of religious life at the present time lies just here, that people are constantly captured by what they take to be fresh and illuminating conceptions, which the student of the History of Doctrine recognizes as old acquaintances in a new dress. Apart from this historical training the student, especially if he is of a speculative turn of mind, is liable to set an undue value on his own ideas, quite ignorant that he is trying to open a lock with a key which has already been tried and found to be useless. The History of Doctrine is thus one of the greatest correctives to self-confident speculation. Of course, the fact that a theory has been rejected in the past after a prolonged discussion does not necessarily imply that it has lost a claim on our attention. Very much the reverse is often true; we constantly meet with cases where it is some lonely thinker, some despised and harried sect, that has been far in advance of the age, and uttered truths almost universally rejected then but cordially accepted by us to-day. But while this is true, it is also true that many views were tested on their merits, and found to be false, and that our

judgment cordially concurs in the verdict. Even those who count it of no moment that these opinions were rejected by authority cannot treat with indifference the weighty arguments by which their rejection was justified. The intellectual acumen which was brought to bear on these questions was very remarkable. It is true that in some cases intellectual subtlety was not united with a high type of piety. But with men like Athanasius and Basil and many more, the two went hand in hand, and what gave the chief impulse to their controversy was the feeling that the very essence of Christianity was at stake. Moreover, acquaintance with the history of thought enables a man to keep his balance; he is not so easily swept off his feet, his judgment is not warped by the fascination of novelty on the one side, or by conservative prejudice on the other. He has also the advantage of knowing what his predecessors had to say with reference to such theories. Again and again one is struck with the inextinguishable character of speculations and practices which a superficial judgment would consider to be obsolete. Frowned on by ecclesiastical authorities, or suppressed by brutal persecution, they have shown their vitality by their constant reappearance.

The student quickly discovers how deeply the non-Christian environment influenced the development and formulation of Christian doctrine. Christianity was at a quite early date profoundly affected by the thought, religion, and institutions of the Pagan world. Greek philosophy quickly entered into, and profoundly coloured the stream; the religious ideas alike of Paganism and Judaism soon modified the simple worship of the new religion, and the civil organization of the empire speedily impressed its stamp upon

the organization of the Church. Throughout the whole history of Christian Theology this action of the environment has gone on. The decisions of the great Œcumenical Councils in the fourth and fifth centuries may have been in harmony with profound Christian truth, but we cannot fail to recognize that they were largely influenced by current Greek Philosophy. Anselm's doctrine of the Atonement reflects the social conditions of his own time. Theologians who had been trained as lawyers introduced into Christian Theology the conceptions of jurisprudence. Now, all this may be right or may be wrong. We may well believe that Greek Philosophy and Roman Law had their definitely appointed part to play in the formation of Christian Theology. It is our duty to recognize, however, that they did play such a part, and to refuse to label with the stamp of Primitive Christianity what really has come into theology from a different source altogether.

It is, I believe, true that the systematic study of the New Testament has vindicated the essential harmony with apostolic Christianity of the main lines of our evangelical belief. But whether this be so or not, the leading principles for which I am contending are clear. Let me briefly summarize them. In the first place since religion is a permanent factor in human life the necessity for a theory of religion, that is, for a theology, can never pass away. Secondly, our own age must reconstruct theology in the light of the best knowledge it can obtain. We must be faithful to the call given us by the Spirit in the growing illumination of the Christian consciousness. Thirdly, our own age is in a more favourable position than any that have preceded it to create an adequate Christian Theology. We understand the nature of religion

through its numerous historical manifestations as it has never been understood before. The science of Comparative Religion, the investigations into the phenomena of the religious consciousness have alike helped us to realize what the religious instinct is, and the various lines on which it has sought its satisfaction. And since the great source of our theology and the test of its genuinely Christian character must always be Scripture, the immense service rendered by the critical movement and by the study of Biblical theology has placed us in a position far more favourable than before for constructing a scientific theology which shall be true to the religion of the Bible. And lastly, the careful and prolonged investigation into the History of Doctrine has helped us to appreciate the influence of environment and to sift out the non-Christian accretions which have gathered about the Gospel. We need not anticipate that a theology so constructed will set aside the main lines of Christian doctrine, and we shall have, let us hope, a richer, fuller, more scientific conception of the Gospel, with the proportion and the connexion of truth more clearly exhibited, and with the emphasis more correctly distributed.

CHAPTER XXII

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

It is one of the infirmities of human nature to desire an infallible authority. And this authority is sought now in Scripture, now in the Church, now in inward personal illumination. It has been one of the serious difficulties of Protestantism that it has constantly found an infallible seat of authority in Scripture. The difficulty was less serious for the mediaeval Church since it accepted the allegorical interpretation and also claimed the right to determine the true meaning of Scripture. It could thus escape the difficulties which Protestantism with its insistence on the literal sense has found so grave. But for a long time the position of Protestantism in this respect seemed satisfying and secure. The humblest, the most unlettered Christian could read his Bible assured that he was listening in his spirit to the very voice of God. It came to him with unquestioned claim on his belief. On whatever theme it spoke it uttered the final word, setting aside in their own subjects the profoundest thoughts and most searching investigations of philosopher, scientist, or historian. When Omniscience had spoken, the word of fallible man could not be placed in competition with the Divine utterance. The Book was enthroned as God's vicar on earth. It taught men the truth without any admixture of error, laid down the right line of conduct and set the standard by which they would ultimately be judged. Vast multitudes no

doubt, who are as yet untouched by modern problems, still maintain this attitude. But as the newer generations push them aside, the number of those who believe in an infallible Bible in the full sense of the term is bound steadily to diminish.

The problem is in truth much less simple than this high and rigid theory recognizes. Those who want a plain answer to a plain question will no doubt be dissatisfied with what one has to say about it; but one of the things it is well for us to learn is that however much we may demand such an answer we have frequently to make up our minds to go without it. Our situation is much less easy and it is more responsible. Yet if we have cast upon us the burden of discrimination there is a corresponding relief. If it is said that we lose all sense of security unless at every point we can feel that we are reading the actual utterances of the Holy Spirit, are there not many points where we may be much relieved to feel that we are not reading them? If as I have tried to show, the human factor has co-operated on a large scale in the creation of Scripture, is it not what we should expect that human infirmity and error should mingle with the heavenly truth? And if our natural anticipation is verified by a judgment which refuses to be blinded by theory, is it not a cause of thankfulness that we are not committed to a theory which involved an almost dishonest apologetic? For its purpose the Bible may possess all that we really need to have in it, and we ought not to be more disturbed in our use of it than in our trust of our senses because occasionally they deceive us. But it is an important question on what we can stay our souls when the old foundations have irretrievably broken up. After all we may easily overrate the degree of certainty which the older theory gave us. The controversies of a divided Christendom, each

side appealing to the same infallible authority, show us clearly enough some of the practical limitations to which the use of such an authority is exposed.

There are those who would call us away from all external authority to find God and His truth within our own souls. To all of us the thought of the light that lighteneth every man should be precious, and the insistence on first-hand experience is never untimely. Yet the truth is here as elsewhere, only in a fuller degree, that infallibility is not to be expected. Indeed for the rank and file, individualism is beset with the most serious perils and limitations. On these I need not dwell, for the case of the mystic and saint shows them clearly enough. Of Mysticism I would desire to speak with warm but discriminating appreciation. To our own age the message of Mysticism should be of great value. On the one side it is a valuable corrective to the gaudy materialism that finds expression in so many forms; and on the other side it should give depth to our presentation of the Gospel, which is too often disastrously superficial. The impatience with theology, for which theologians, it is true, are much to blame, the tendency to reduce religion to emotionalized ethics, or to philanthropy, are ominous signs which remind us how urgent is our need to give ourselves to meditation on the deep things of God. Here the brooding mystic and the spiritual clairvoyant may carry us forward into deep and secret places, and lift us in their clear and steady flight above the sheer precipice to heights we cannot scale alone. It is the saints who are the true experts, and call to renewed study of them is worthy of all acceptance. We must approach them in humility and self-distrust, believing that to them is given, as it is not given to ourselves, to see the heavenly vision and to hear the unutterable words. Yet we must call no man

master, not even the mystic and the saint ; otherwise we fall into one-sidedness and are in danger of placing the bizarre accident on a level with the essential and precious truth. The spiritual imagination is not to have its wings clipped, and its eyes hooded, and its feet tethered to the ground, yet in its most daring flights it should not be divorced from sanity and common sense. When the mystic seems to talk pure folly, what is the bewildered reader, with the best wish to be sympathetic, to do ? Certainly he must not sacrifice his intellect and blindly swallow on authority that of which his reason can make nothing. Yet not being himself an expert, he must recognize that what seems to him to be folly may be that foolishness of God which is wiser than the wisest wisdom of man. He can, I think, make no use of such material, but he can suspend his judgment.

It is the temptation of the mystic to foster an undue subjectivity, to despise external aids, to become detached from his fellows and miss the discipline of their criticism. Of course it is very easy to be unjust here. Mysticism has often been studied as an aberration of the human intellect. And to those who approach it in this temper it is clear that its real value must remain undisclosed. But our eyes may be blinded by indiscriminate enthusiasm as well as sealed by impatient contempt. In this as in everything else we should desire a balanced judgment. Thus when we consider the phenomena of mystical states we are often struck by something abnormal in the constitution of mystics, sometimes physical, sometimes psychical, often both. We can hardly doubt that some of their experiences were the outcome of hysteria or hallucination. But we must beware of drawing the wrong inference from this unquestionable fact. They must be judged by their work. We do not think of Julius Cæsar merely as a victim of epilepsy.

We judge him by the tremendous impact of his personality on the history of the world. It is certainly true that the presence of some abnormality in body or mind has been frequently found in persons who have profoundly influenced their contemporaries. It may have made them more sensitive than their fellows to suggestion from a higher sphere. But it is remarkable how often such men have exhibited a sanity of judgment combined with great executive ability. It is true that there is something to be said on the other side. Too often the mystic has been a recluse, selfishly absorbed in the culture of his own spiritual life and indifferent to the needs of his fellows, building tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration when he ought to have been with the crowd at its foot, strengthening the weak faith of his brethren and driving demons out of the possessed. But it is only the barest justice to say that there have been many mystics who have been fired with a zeal for social service and for whom religion has been no luxurious emotion but a passion to win the best for their fellows. Yet it cannot be doubted that we are confronted here with one of the great perils against which the mystic needs to guard. He may turn his eyes inward till he has no sense for the want and misery and sin about him. And the practice of introspection is itself beset with peril to the soul. There is something morbid in a constant preoccupation with our own spiritual states ; it is not good for us to be alway feeling our pulse and taking our temperature. Ours is to be a hidden life ; we must suffer it to grow in stillness and seclusion without that unremitting probing and analysis which is so unhealthy a feature in many lives. There are religious diaries which remind one of the clinical charts kept by nurses to show the progress of their patients. All the fluctuations of temperature are care-

fully noted and described. There is, however, this important difference that in this case the patient keeps his own chart ; and with all due recognition of the place for self-examination in the Christian life this dangerously errs on the side of excess. Every one recognizes that it is bad for the sick person to dwell upon his symptoms. We cannot argue unreservedly from one case to the other but it is surely better to leave the Great Physician to do His work without hampering Him over much by our own interference.

And when we look at the content of the revelation we are struck by its tendency to substitute negative and abstract for positive, concrete, and vivid conceptions of God, by its leaning to Pantheism, and its impatience of history. And of course the mystics do not all say the same things. There are mystics and mystics. How are we to discriminate ? If St. John of the Cross and Santa Teresa, why not Swedenborg ? If the reply comes that the Scriptures are the sure word of prophecy, this does not settle the question, since the mystic also tells us that his own thoughts are quite in harmony with Scripture. For Scripture contains a mystical sense, and his own revelations will be found in complete agreement with this. The question, therefore, arises whether such a second sense can be accepted. Protestants have as a rule denied it, admitting it only in the case of the Song of Songs. The truth is that if we once surrender ourselves to allegorical interpretation we are in danger of abandoning the Scriptures to the play of endless caprice. The only safe rule to work with in the first instance is that Scripture means what it says. The scientific exegete is the expert who tells us what the actual meaning of Scripture is. But all exegetes are not experts alike. The interpreter needs a philological equipment in the first place, he needs also to

know the circumstances out of which the piece he is interpreting comes. Therefore he must be a critic who can date his documents, and a historian that he may have the requisite familiarity with the circumstances that gave it birth. But to be a perfect interpreter he needs much more than these; he should be familiar with great literature that he may gain a sure exegetical tact and delicacy of insight into his author's meaning. And to crown all, he should be an expert in the subject matter itself. (If he is expounding a religious classic he should be in deep sympathy with religion) It is his duty to think himself back into the mind of his author, and to expound in the first instance what his author meant. If we must recognize a secondary sense we have here something like an objective standard by conformity with which its discovery may be controlled.

But should such a sense be admitted at all? We often find meanings in great works of Art which were probably not intended by the authors themselves. Yet they may be genuine interpretations of the poem or painting, since it often happens that unconscious genius has been at work and the author has written or painted better than he knew. Accordingly where inspiration works at so high a level as it often does in the Bible we may not unnaturally expect to find deeper senses than those of which the original author was aware. But these are probably extensions of the principle which the writer embodied in a narrower application. I revert here to a point dealt with when I was speaking of the argument from prophecy. Quotations from the Old Testament often receive in the New Testament a Messianic application. Sometimes we can hardly think that this is more than an almost mechanical use of some quite accidental point of contact, at times purely verbal. But this is by no means always the case. The Old

Testament prophecy and the New Testament fulfilment have a real unity, not in the sense that the prophet was consciously writing history beforehand, but in the sense that he did express a great principle which found its fullest application in Jesus. I hold, for example, that the Christian interpretation of the Servant of Yahweh is quite justified. The prophet's language is fulfilled in Jesus as in no other. Are we then to say that the New Testament fulfilment controls the Old Testament interpretation? Surely not, if it is clear, as I think it is, that the author had not our Lord in his mind at all. Are we then to say, It is quite unimportant what the author meant, since for the Christian his prophecy refers to Christ? This I believe to be quite illegitimate. We must ascertain the author's meaning before we permit ourselves to find the reference to Christ in it. In the first place we owe it to the prophet himself. The meaning he meant to convey was one of real moment. Let us not forget that the passages which deal with the Servant of Yahweh are, leaving Christianity out of account altogether, among those of the first importance for the interpretation of the religion of Israel, ranking with the New Covenant passage in Jeremiah. For those of us who wish to understand that religion, in the assured belief that it was the Divinely ordered preparation for Christianity, a neglect of the primary sense would be a disastrous impoverishment of our interpretation and a wilful blinding of ourselves to the lessons that history was Divinely intended to convey. In the next place I am convinced that the collective judgment of Christendom has been right in finding the fulfilment of these prophecies in Christ. But let us suppose that we leap to this conclusion. We lose one very important thought in our interpretation of Christ Himself. I do not doubt, for reasons I have

given at length elsewhere,[1] that by the Suffering Servant the prophet intended Israel, which had died in the captivity and was to be raised again in the restoration. When we look more closely at the Servant's mission as described by the prophet, we see that it is a two-fold one. Israel is on the one side the revealer of God to the world, on the other side it is the sufferer for the world's sins. Now, it is a thought of great value to us that Christ is Israel, inasmuch as He concentrates Israel in Himself, so far as Israel had a meaning in universal history. The functions of Israel as teacher and sufferer, which could, in the nature of the case, be realized only imperfectly in the nation, were completely realized in Christ, who embodies Israel in Himself and carries its task to completion (see pp. 373 f.). The great thought of the election of nations to fulfil God's ends is completely lost if we set aside the primary interpretation of the words as immaterial for ourselves, while much is lost on the other hand in our appreciation of Christ's significance.

Sometimes the complaint is made that the newer attitude to the Bible has deprived the modern preacher of many parts of the Old Testament which his predecessors used with great profit in their ministry. If this means that the 'Christ in Leviticus' type of sermon has disappeared for good from our pulpits, I can only be thankful that preachers are diverted from the unhistorical treatment of an obsolete Law to such parts of Scripture as do not need to be distorted by fancy and caprice into expressing the mighty truths of the Gospel. And I should say quite confidently on the other side that vast tracts of Scripture which were left alone or abandoned to the faddist have been recovered by Biblical criticism for the edification of the Church. Only in

[1] *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, pp. 180–193.

criticizing present-day preaching, we should make allowances for the fact that we are now in a transition period. As the critical view of Scripture comes to its own, it will be possible for the ripe fruits of reverent Bible study to be made accessible in a way which at present is not possible. For my own part I may say that criticism has never attracted me for its own sake. The all-important thing for the student of the Bible is to pierce to the core of its meaning. Now, since it has pleased God to give us His revelation in the form of a history, it is necessary for us to approach its interpretation by a historical path. But no history can be scientific, in accordance, that is, with the truth of things, unless it critically examines its documents and the material they enshrine. Thus criticism becomes for the interpreter of Scripture, not a task he may decline at his will, but an obvious duty that he dare not shirk.

In any case I am clear that we must neither deny the primary sense nor set it aside as unimportant. Whether we can recognize a secondary sense or not, reverence for Scripture requires that we should first ascertain the primary sense. Perhaps we ought to judge the legitimacy of a secondary sense by the naturalness with which it grows out of the primary. It is probably safest to take the New Testament in its primary sense as our standard. What is in conflict with that sense as a whole is ruled out as an individual idiosyncrasy, even though it come to us through the greatest of the non-canonical mystics. The chief concern for us, after all, is the apprehension of the essential things. And I cannot believe that these are other than those which lie plainly expressed and level to the reception of the whole Christian people. These are not the things of which the mystics tell us. They have much to say of which Scripture says but little. What they have to say may

be true and important, and may contribute much to the deepening of our thought and a quickening of our life. Yet there are very many who find themselves at home in the deep passages of Scripture to whom the mystics will always seem to talk, not the language, but a dialect of Canaan. The great thing for us is to know the language, the dialect also if we can. If we cannot, there is no cause for distress. We have the one thing needful; as for everything else have we not eternity in which to learn it?

With all our appreciation then of the value of Mysticism and the recognition that a Christianity without it is an impoverished Gospel, we cannot find in the mystical experiences of the great mystics themselves, to say nothing of the ordinary man, a guidance which supersedes that given by Scripture. Do we find what we want then in the Church? This has the advantage that it recognizes the collective consciousness as Mysticism fails to do. It is the community which speaks and not the gifted individual, a community founded by Christ Himself, the recipient of His gift of the Holy Spirit. It is claimed by great organizations that here the individual finds the authority he needs both for certainty and for control. It is an authority which functions through human agents but in its origin and imperious claim to obedience it is the authority of God Himself. But while no Christian could do other than recognize with humility and prostration of spirit the authority of God as something to be accepted with the whole heart and obeyed to the uttermost of his power, it is a truly dangerous thing to assert this kind of Divine right for any lower tribunal, even for the Church of Christ.

In saying this it is far from my intention to minimize the allegiance which the Christian owes to the Church. There is among us too much of the freelance spirit, too

self-assertive an individualism, too great a readiness to set at naught the authority of the Church alike in action and belief. Loyalty to the Church and enthusiasm for it are indispensable if we are to win for our religion the inward strength and outward victory for which we profess to be so eager. Only our supreme loyalty here must not be to that section of the Church to which we belong but rather to the whole body of Christian people dispersed throughout the world. We must be Catholics in the fullest sense of the term, and with no contracted vision of the Church embrace in our conception of it all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, with any organization or with none. Had the Church been so faithful to the guidance of the Spirit that no disastrous schisms had shattered her unity and split her into warring factions with contradictory messages, then we might have spoken of her authority in a sense which is no longer possible, though not even to the undivided Church could we accord a plenary authority over our faith. When we are invited to recognize the authority of the Church on questions of belief, we cannot close our eyes to the very discordant voices that come from Churches which lay claim to possess the rue notes of Catholicity in an apostolic type of ministry, a pure doctrine, and an uninterrupted succession.

The relationship in which the Church and the Bible are placed by advocates of this view is also unacceptable. A derivative rather than a primary authority is accorded to the canonical literature. It was written by the Church and must be read and interpreted through the beliefs of the Church. The statement that the Church wrote the New Testament is one to which it is hard for the Biblical scholar to attach any meaning. It is, of course, true that the New Testament did not create the Church, that the Church had been in

existence probably for decades before any New Testament book was written. It is also true that in a sense the New Testament was created by the Church—in other words, the collection of the various writings into a Canon was the Church's achievement, an unconscious achievement though it may have been. Moreover the life of the Church lies behind the New Testament literature and is the presupposition of its origin. But all of these taken together do not justify the statement that the Church wrote the New Testament, still less do they justify the practical inferences which are drawn from this position. It is unhistorical to suppose that the mind of the Church was crystallized in the Epistle to the Romans or the Epistle to the Galatians. That is to invert the true order. It was not the collective consciousness of Christians which guided Paul to pen his immortal expositions of fundamental Christian truth. These had their source in his own experience of sin and redemption ; they guided the Church, and were not the expression of her mind. The Church guarantees the New Testament—she did not write it.

The point on which I should desire to lay stress is the collective witness given by experts in the deep things of God. So long as we are preoccupied with individuals we are exposed to the serious peril of subjectivity, but when we turn from the single expert to the experts in a body we find that the eccentricities of individuals may be controlled by the testimony of the whole number. We need an objective standard to enable us to decide between the competing claims of those who profess to be equally illumined by the Holy Spirit. Viewed in this way our thought does not rest when we are speaking of the authority of the Church, on the official pronouncements, on councils and formularies, but on the witness borne by the saints who are the

true experts in religion, but also on the consentient testimony of the Church as a whole.

Now it is along this line that we can affirm the authority of the Bible. If the subjective illumination experienced by a saint is committed to writing or expressed in oral utterance, then the same kind of authority might be claimed for the outer expression as for the inward certainty. Not perhaps the same degree, for experience is incommunicable and the limitations of expression must be taken into account. But on the other hand one would sooner trust what the expert with the largest measure of light was able to convey than one's own inward apprehension, darkened by imperfection of character and a feebler religious instinct. Very much in the Bible comes under this head, it contains by far the most precious collection in existence of classical utterances upon religion. And the truth of these is attested to us by their self-authenticating quality on the one side and their constant verification in experience on the other.

But we can start also from another point. Most Christians would regard the words of Jesus as unquestionably authoritative. It is true that these have been transmitted to us by others, and questions are raised as to the accuracy of the report, especially in view of the divergence between the reports on quite important matters. Even where we reach what we may take to be certainly authentic in substance we must allow for the influence of transmission and of translation into Greek on the form. There is also the question how far what is uttered was affected by the temporary views of His time. But it is quite easy for us here as elsewhere to be daunted by difficulties in theory which are by no means so formidable in practice. Even when we have employed such tests as a sane criticism would suggest we

have a large body of authentic teaching amply guaranteed to us in substance, largely guaranteed by its inimitable character in form. And in the main at least this may be recognized as authoritative even when we have allowed to the full for the influences of the intellectual environment. That a temporary element derived from the views of His time should mingle with His teaching is no more surprising than that on the authorship of Biblical books He should accept the views current in His day. Questions of this kind are of little, if any, practical importance, whatever theoretical perplexities they may raise. What is perhaps most important of all is that Jesus gives us the right point of view, His conception of God is not only final in itself, it gives us the dominating principle for the construction of our theology.

The authority which attaches to the New Testament writers is less easy to place on the right basis. Their teaching is more mixed than that of the Master. The non-Christian environment and inheritance have influenced it more deeply. It is less completely controlled by His fundamental conception of God. But they are faithful in the main to the lines He had laid down, they interpret His Person and His Work more fully than had been possible to Him, and their teaching was largely the outcome of an experience which He created. Here as elsewhere we must be content with recognizing that we have ample guidance both for thought and conduct if we refrain from that passion for logical completeness which so frequently commits us to indefensible positions. And there are considerations which may reconcile us to some of our difficulties. The rich variety with which Christianity is treated is ample compensation for such divergence of view as may be detected in the New Testament. It is a positive gain

that we have ceased to regard the Bible as in all its parts a final guide in matters of morality, and by the recognition that its morality is progressive have effectually corrected a dangerous misuse. And similarly in theology it is a great thing that we should have learnt to go to the Bible for what it is rather than for what it is not. The indiscriminate use of Scripture as a single source of equal value, as a quarry from every part of which stones may be indifferently collected to build up the temple of constructive dogmatics will, it may be hoped, soon pass away never to return. The new view does not, it may be urged, give the same certainty as the old. But if the old is becoming incredible, what then? May we not be meant to understand that the desire for infallibility is itself unhealthy and that while we have abundance for our needs there is much which is deliberately left undefined?

We can readily see how impossible it is to draw hard and fast lines when we attempt to do it. Thus many have found great relief in the principle that on some topics we must not suppose that the Bible was intended to instruct us, since they are remote from the domain of religious and moral truth where it is supreme. And such a principle is valuable provided we do not wish to apply it too strictly. We cannot say in any hard and fast way that the authority of the Bible is to be restricted to the ethical and spiritual region, while what lies outside may be freely surrendered. We cannot create a scientific frontier on these lines. The territories overlap, the spheres of interest intersect at many points. Religious and ethical truth are inseparably bound up with history, and the question inevitably arises, How far does our interest in the former pledge us to accept the latter? We cannot be indifferent to history, since such indifference would vitally imperil

the essence of our religion. But how far is that principle to be pushed in the case of the Gospel history and the records of Christ's teaching? Or it might be argued that the historicity of the Old Testament could be surrendered without any fatal loss to Christianity. Yet here again we are bound to remember that Christianity stands in organic relation with the religion of Israel and that revelation has taken for its channel the history of that people. Accordingly it really does concern us to reconstruct so far as we can the actual development through which the nation and its religion passed. And while on the one side we cannot easily hand over all the non-spiritual, non-moral elements in the Bible, we cannot on the other hand claim indisputable authority for the elements which remain. We have seen that the historical form which revelation assumed necessarily involved progress from lower to higher levels, and that the mediation of revelation through human personality and experience has deeply coloured the Divine truth. As a matter of fact our attitude is not determined solely in such matters by formal logic. We are not mere thinking machines. We feel ourselves as well as think ourselves into our deepest convictions. We settle down into them not by a mere process of argument, which after all affects and shapes our inward beliefs much less than we sometimes suppose, but by a process far more subtle and complex, in which argument, feeling, experience, authority, and sensitiveness to environment are inextricably blended. But convictions thus reached are rooted far more firmly and held more tenaciously than those which are simply the conclusion of a chain of reasoning.

And vague though our theory may be, for our practical attitude to the authority of Scripture this is not important. What it most concerns us to know carries

its own witness within itself and is recognized by our inward faculty. Our reason illumined by the Holy Spirit recognizes the truth which reason illumined by the Holy Spirit communicated. The witness in the heart responds to the witness in the Word. It was one of the leading principles of the Reformers to ground our acceptance of Scripture not on the authority of the Church, highly though that might be esteemed, but on its own qualities as immediately recognized by those who had experienced the work of the Holy Spirit. This is constantly stated in the authoritative documents of the Reformation. Thus Calvin says in his Institutes :

'For as God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in His own Word, so also the Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit who spake by the mouths of the prophets should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them.'

And in very noble language the Westminster Confession sets forth the same doctrine. From our standpoint it may be difficult to endorse the whole of this statement, but at least the emphasis is in the right place. The passage is as follows :

'The Authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof ; and therefore it is to be received because it is the word of God.

'We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scripture ; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full

discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.'

This majestic passage, vulnerable as it may be in detail is yet most valuable in that it refuses to rest the authority of the Bible on any external witness, however august. Not in any institution, though that institution be the Church of Christ, but in its own Divine quality, self-attesting to whosesoever heart was lit by the same Spirit who spoke in prophet and in apostle, was its authority securely based. But just as there was an interaction of the Divine and the human in the creation of Scripture, so there is a co-operation of man with God in the estimate which is formed of it. For the inward witness of the Spirit to the Word is not to be found simply in some wholly supernatural assurance in which God speaks and there is nothing for man to do but to hear His voice. I am not concerned to deny the reality of such an experience. But I desire to claim the other type of experience as one which the Holy Spirit may equally select. In this experience the reason has its place and its rights. Those are not the best friends of religion who decry the human reason. It is the glory of our religion that it appeals to the reason. No doubt like every human thing it has its imperfections and we must seek to enlighten it by every means in our power. If we throw discredit upon it, what is left but a philosophic scepticism? For even submission to an external authority, the renunciation of private judgment, the sacrifice of the intellect, involves in the last analysis an act of private judgment. If we cannot trust reason to

discover truth or at least to recognize it when revealed, we must renounce all hopes of knowing it. We dishonour God by distrusting the faculty which He has Himself planted within us, all the more when that faculty has been redeemed by His Son, renewed and enlightened by His Holy Spirit. No doubt the claim for the individual reason needs to be stated far more cautiously than has often been the case. The right of private judgment of course does not mean that every man has a right to think as his caprice or inclination may dictate, that one man's opinion is as good as another's, that the authority of society or the Church should carry no weight with it and may be lightly set aside. It is implied in the affirmation of the right, that whoever claims to exercise it should have fulfilled the corresponding duty. We must earn the right to our opinion. We must have familiarized ourselves with the issues, studied the facts, examined the arguments for the various opinions, sincerely cleansed our mind from prejudice, humbly sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And having thus prepared ourselves, we must also have given its due significance to the large collective judgment expressed by society or the Church. But when after such an intellectual, moral, and spiritual preparation we have reached our conclusion we may without arrogance or impropriety claim the right to form and accept the responsibility of holding it. Even Scripture itself may be judged by us in this way.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VERIFICATION OF REVELATION IN EXPERIENCE [1]

This title at once suggests a whole series of questions. Assuming that the Revelation given in Scripture is that intended, in what sense do we propose to make it the subject of verification? Is it the whole Bible as it stands or certain portions of it? Again is it the whole range of subjects on which Scripture has spoken or only a selection that is contemplated in our inquiry? Do we emphasize the unity of Scripture or do we recognize a large diversity within it? Do we confine ourselves to the Bible itself or do we include the affirmations which theology has made about it? What is it that we want to verify? Is it fact or idea, or both? Do we pursue our search in the field of psychology, or history, or metaphysics, or doctrinal theology? How far is experience competent to take us in our search? To whom is the verification given, to him who is immediately conscious of the experience or to others? Whose experience have we to take into account, the individual or the collective? our own merely or that of others? If the latter what limits are we to set to our search?

[1] Paper read at the Methodist Assembly held in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, on October 5, 1909. Some passages have been restored, which had to be omitted in reading for want of time, and some trifling alterations have been made to fit it for its new function.

Is there a standard type of experience, the common possession of all who call themselves Christians ? or are there types of experience each of which may claim to be a legitimate though not a monopolist form of Christianity ? And indeed have we the right to limit ourselves to Christianity ? By far the larger though not the more precious portion of our Bible is pre-Christian and ought therefore to admit of verification from those who remain at the Old Testament point of view.

I have enumerated these questions not because it is my intention to attempt the task of answering them in a time which would be wholly inadequate for the purpose but that some of the salient issues may be before us at the outset. I hope, however, to indicate my position with reference to some of the problems involved.

I begin with the literature which we propose to test. In a sacred book it is at first surprising to find so much that is secular, not a little that seems unfitted to be the vehicle either of religious or moral instruction. What are we to do with elements in the Bible apparently so intractable to spiritual handling as the genealogies in Chronicles, or the account of the division of Canaan in Joshua ? If every part of Scripture, just because it is Scripture, must yield spiritual or ethical edification, we shall be driven to allegorical interpretation. But that way of escape is closed against us. Scripture means what it says and it is not to be run into the moulds of this or that interpreter's caprice. We cannot escape by reading back the New Testament into the Old. By such an illegitimate anachronism we wrong both the Old Testament and the New, we deprive the former of its independent value and we depreciate the uniqueness of the Christian revelation. Are we then to strike out large sections of the Bible on the ground that in our sacred literature they have no right to be there ? It is

only an erroneous theory as to the real character of the Bible, that could lead us to answer such a question in the affirmative. We must rise from the mistaken view of Scripture which it implies, to a conception that shall enable us to rejoice in their inclusion. We must break with an atomistic view of the Bible, or we shall never discern its full value. We have no right to insist that every part of it shall yield a direct spiritual message. Such a demand involves an illegitimate and violent exegesis. There is much which has no spiritual value when it is torn from the organism of which it forms part. A very large number of passages come home to the soul with immediate and self-authenticating power. And it is these passages which sustain the average reader's estimate of the Bible. He extends to the whole literature the impression that is made by these portions of it. But what of the other portions which do not satisfy this test? The ordinary Bible reader theoretically recognizes the inspiration of these as of the other portions. But the practical treatment varies. Some read them in the belief, which is not free from superstition, that the reading of them is in itself bound to bring a blessing, while others who equally recognize their inspired character, will neglect them for passages which are charged with religious and moral power. Both attitudes are unfortunate and they rest on what I have called an atomistic view of Scripture. It is only when we rise above this idea of the Bible and regard it as a great connected whole that these parts of Scripture which are either neglected or read without benefit will be appreciated at their proper worth. The lack of historical imagination is responsible both for the abuse of many parts of Scripture and for the failure to use them. Once we have grasped the principle that revelation has come as a process in history,

Scripture is invested for us with a new significance.

To a large extent we may say that the Bible is occasional and incidental, concerned with immediate necessities and contemporary problems. Even when it narrates the history of earlier ages it does so with a mainly practical motive. The selection of incidents is deliberately made for its bearing on the writer's own age. The interest of the scientific historian is almost entirely absent, the dominant interest is edification. And when we turn to the prophets, in many ways the most important part of the Old Testament, this interest in the contemporary situation becomes much more apparent. The consequence is that the prophetic literature has been very widely neglected and where not neglected it has been misunderstood. Its relevance to contemporary conditions prevents it from being immediately available for conditions altogether different. And yet there is no part of the Old Testament which we can so little afford to neglect. For while the message was limited by the circumstances of the hour the principles it embodied were of eternal validity. If then we are to win their full value from the prophetic utterances we must aim at two things. We must reach the eternal principle by divesting it of its temporary garb, and we must observe how the prophets apply the principle to the situation with which they deal. But we can achieve our double purpose only through a precise apprehension of the actual conditions to which the eternal truth was so exquisitely adjusted. And it is from this point of view that much in the Bible, which on an atomistic conception appears to be superfluous or even out of place, becomes valuable. For it gives us indispensable assistance in reconstructing these conditions, it supplies us with atmosphere and background. It may have little independent value, but it was not included in Scripture

for its own sake but for the sake of the whole organism of which it forms a necessary part. 'The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee.' We have not made the highest use of the Old Testament when we have nourished our souls on its loftiest and choicest passages. It is when we have apprehended it as a great living organism in which each part has its place and function that we have rightly understood it. It is a whole which is more important than the greatest of its parts. Moreover on a true view of Scripture even the limitations and imperfections of the Old Testament have their significance. The Old Testament is not our final authority. Judaism is not for us on the level of Christianity. The contrast between the prayers of the Psalmists for vengeance on their persecutors and the prayer of Stephen for his murderers is a precious testimony to the revolution wrought by Christ.

It has been with no intention of deserting my theme that I have spoken at such length on the nature of Scripture. We must know what it is that we want to verify before we attempt the process of verification. Moreover, what I have already said forms an introduction to this section of the subject. That revelation is a process in history prepares us to believe that it will find its verification in life. And especially I would emphasize that much in Scripture is the direct creation of experience. The Bible is pre-eminently a book of experimental religion. What experience has created we may expect experience to verify. But we must not overlook the inherent limitations of experience, even when interpreted in the largest way, as an instrument of verification. Experience cannot verify alleged historical events in a sacred book; they must be left to historical investigation. It cannot directly verify the authorship of books, that is the province of criticism. It is impera-

tive to insist on this because it is constantly overlooked. Cowper's famous couplet on the poor cottager who

> 'Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
> A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,'

illustrates what I mean. Her conviction that the Bible was true rested simply on her experience of redemption. But obviously the religious element in the Bible is all that religious experience can directly verify. The Bible, however, contains very much more than a religious element. In particular it includes much of a historical character which in the nature of the case experience cannot verify. Were Christianity simply a matter of inward experiences with such outward results as flow from them we might stake our position on the verification they supply. But the Gospel stands or falls by a series of facts in space and time, and by certain theological affirmations which it makes about these. And it is very difficult to argue on the strength of transactions within the soul for the truth of historical events or theological doctrines. The cures effected by Christian Scientists do not guarantee the metaphysics of Christian Science. It is unquestionable that through the gracious condescension of God spiritual blessing has often come to devout souls where the explanation of the experience has been entirely false. The sense of union with Christ which comes to the pious Romanist in the Eucharist does not prove the Roman theory of the Mass. The Biblical doctrine of sin's universal dominion I find attested in experience, but experience can give no direct attestation to the events narrated in the third chapter of Genesis. The proclamation of redemption has found its echo in the experience of the redeemed, but that experience cannot vindicate the historicity of the facts on which the Church has always insisted that salvation

depends. Accordingly as one who is deeply concerned for the acceptance of the great Christian truths I can only express my dismay at the recklessness with which the Christian case is sometimes staked on experience alone. It is a combination of historical proof with the argument from experience which alone can bear the weight.

A second limitation of experience is to be found in its mixed origin and character. It is not simple but complex and many factors have gone to its making. The Christian life is created and fostered by the Divine action, but the Divine is inevitably coloured and limited by the human. Elements which we contribute mingle with those that have their source in the gracious working of the Holy Spirit. It is the play of innumerable forces, many of them hardly guessed by us, which has made us what we are. We must beware therefore of resting a weight on our experience which it will not bear, or we may even surround with a halo our own foibles and eccentricities. We escape to a certain extent from these dangers when we permit the experience of others to enlarge and correct our own. It is true that we cannot be content with a second-hand experience. Our relationship to God must be immediate and direct. It is also true that the soul's secrets are largely incommunicable, and the most brilliant combination of psychological analysis with gift of expression inevitably leaves the deepest things unsaid. But when all this has been admitted it remains true that for our own profit we do well to enrich and expand our own spiritual life by communion with rarer and riper spirits, while it is imperative that when we use experience as an instrument of verification we should understand it in its collective rather than in its individual sense. I must be able to say what Christ has meant to me—otherwise my testi-

mony loses its note of authenticity and conviction and the intimate glow of feeling which gathers about the most cherished possession. But if I am to press on others the argument from experience, or if I seek to find the Bible mirrored and verified in experience, I must interpret this in the largest way, humbly conscious how narrow at the best is the reflexion my own life can give.

What then can experience do for us? It is in the first place the indispensable complement of history. If after we have studied the historical evidence we reach the conclusion that Jesus was what the Church claims Him to have been, and did what she claims Him to have done, that conclusion itself will not be long maintained unless experience continually reaffirms it. For if the proof from experience has its limitations, so also, as every historical critic knows only too well, has the argument from history. Left alone neither can bear the weight of the Christian case. Locked into an arch where each supports the other we can securely trust our faith to them. Experience corroborates the testimony of history to the Divinity of Christ and the redeeming quality of His work. In the next place, the religious experience is in itself a fact for which an explanation must be found. It is with no mere individual nor even with a group that we are concerned, otherwise hallucination, individual or collective, might be a reasonable explanation. But in the vast experience of Christendom we are dealing with facts as real as any which are investigated by the scientist or the historian, and which require some great and worthy cause. Moreover this specifically Christian experience has been associated with a high view of Christ's Person and Work. When these have been abandoned, the experience tends to die out and the enthusiasm to die down. From the inseparable connexion of the fact with the doctrine we cannot

strictly infer the truth of the latter, but at least we are strongly predisposed to accept it. In view, however, of the fact that this experience is associated with very different theories, or with theories of the most rudimentary kind, we cannot regard it as verifying more than the general doctrine. In other words we cannot build on it any developed Christology or any particular theory of the Atonement. Again, while experience is largely incommunicable and therefore comes with its note of immediate assurance only to him who receives it, yet his testimony as to his experience is calculated to impress and win those who are without. At this point also a qualification may be made which we are sometimes tempted to overlook. A Church that has been created by a revival, in which conversion has meant that for a large number of its members the continuity of life has been violently ruptured, tends to state and to go on stating the doctrine of assurance in a one-sided way. The old and the new are set in sharp and definite opposition, and the experience of the new life is made all the more vivid by the shock of contrast with the old. The danger is that this should come to be regarded as that which is alone legitimate. And thus on the one side Christians fall into the sin of censoriousness, while on the other side the incautious presentation of the doctrine depresses anxious and scrupulous souls. As a corrective to this we must always keep well to the front our objective tests. On the other hand we must insist that the Divinely appointed conditions are faithfully observed on the human side and leave with God the responsibility for the Divine response. I might add that the doctrine of assurance is a subject which more than most needs judicious handling, and more than most, perhaps, has suffered from the want of it. What is most

mischievous in the Christian life is unreality, and where this takes the form of a manufactured consciousness in obedience to the exigencies of a theory, the gravest harm is done to the spiritual development. No man has the right to make his personal experience normal for all the children of God, and the witness of the Spirit, like all His holy and saving operations, may not assume in each the same form. That the temperament and previous training of the man may condition the precise form it takes is clear. In some it will be more objective in its character than in others.

In what I have said about the Bible and about experience I have to some extent anticipated the consideration of the question how far one is verified by the other. One or two further points demand a few words. Experience may first be verified by repetition. But repetition may be false or true. As false repetition I must reckon the imitation of Christ as it has been often practised. Quite apart from the fact that Christ is the Redeemer, and we the redeemed, He the Master and we the servants, the painful imitation of Him is the mark of a servile temper which has not risen to the liberty of the children of God. Nor do we necessarily reproduce the apostolic type. It is not our aim to restore primitive Christianity, but to fill our own very different conditions with the same spirit. It is the glory of this spirit that it is so fluid and so flexible, that it has a Protean variety of incarnation. There is need of all types, and in each type of much charity towards the rest. So much, indeed, we may learn from primitive Christianity. There was no apostolic type, there were several types. It is natural that many of us should feel the Pauline type to be the most congenial. Yet since it has pleased God that other types should be re-

presented in the classical documents of our faith, we do well to nourish ourselves on these also. Genuine Christianity must be discerned in very divergent forms. It varies from age to age. Within the same age there is wide divergence of groups, within groups there is divergence between individuals.

The individual verifies the New Testament by the immediate response which it awakes within him. The tones struck by these ancient writers set our own heart-strings in sympathetic vibration. It is verified also by the course of our own spiritual history. We may feel, indeed, that our experience is sadly lacking in the intensity which we find in the New Testament, and that there are expressions of it which would have seemed too daring for us to use had we not the warrant which it supplies. Yet with all its shortcomings we may claim that the witness in the heart answers to the witness of the Word. And this argument becomes much more impressive when we turn from the personal to the collective experience. The existence of the Canon is to some extent a proof that the writings had been verified, Of course this statement needs qualification, for there were other criteria of canonicity, and there is a fringe as to which doubt may be legitimately entertained. But the margin of uncertainty is neither large nor important. We should have in the New Testament all we want, even if books whose canonicity has been widely doubted were excluded from it, although the exclusion of the Epistle to the Hebrews would greatly impoverish the New Testament. Moreover, we may thankfully admit that a book is in its right place in the Bible, and yet recognize that it secured that place on grounds which we must regard as false or inadequate. But looking at the matter broadly, the creation of the Canon is one of the most impressive examples of the

response given by experience to Revelation. The Church did not write the Bible, but in a sense she guarantees it. The Church found in the New Testament the record of an earlier experience. There she read the record of what the primitive Church had found Christ to be. And age after age, as she studies that record, she is conscious that here she has the classical expression of what in her turn she has proved Christ to be.

It may, indeed, be urged that much which we claim for the New Testament may also be claimed for other Christian literature. Why should we attach a value to certain parts of the New Testament or even of the Old exceeding that which we attach to some of the finest monuments of the eloquence, the consecration, and the insight into Christian truth, which the later ages of Christendom have produced? Why should we deny to some of our great Christian hymns, which move us profoundly as we sing them, a rank which we accord to many a composition in the Old Testament, that seems to stand on a lower level and moves us far less deeply? Our great books of devotion, our masterpieces of theology, our prayers, our hymns, they too register experience to which we respond. But they are largely secondary and derivative, the New Testament is primary and classical. And from the best which the non-canonical literature of Christendom has to offer us, we turn to the Bible to gain an ever-renewed sense of its uniqueness, of its inexpressible value. It is a light whose radiance illumines our way, while its glow cheers our hearts. It has something to fit our varied individualities and our changing moods. It is, indeed, the river that makes glad and sweet the city of God, a river with clear shallows and unfathomed depths, reflecting now the bright untroubled sky and now the dark and lurid thundercloud, bathing our tired spirits in its warmth and soft-

ness, or bracing them by the rigour of its cold, moving here in a great stillness, and there in a rushing flood, cleansing us from our defilement, reviving us as we drink its life-giving waters, bearing us on its broad bosom through an enchanted land.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF SCRIPTURE

When we speak on the value of Scripture we must beware of too narrow an interpretation of the term. So much emphasis has been placed on Scripture as a storehouse of theology and ethics that the value of the Bible has very probably been held to be largely doctrinal or moral. The function of Scripture has been to prove the truths taught by the Church. But as we have seen over and over again the Bible has a far profounder value than this. We have found it to consist in the fact primarily that it is the record of God's self-revelation through the history of a chosen people and the experience of chosen individuals culminating in His supreme self-disclosure and the redemption of the race through His Son. But the Bible is not just a historical manual. It is necessary to say this explicitly in view of the importance which I have attached to the historical character of revelation. Revelation has in truth come through history, but we find in the Bible a history of God's self-revelation, of sin and redemption, rather than a history in the common sense of the term. There is no doubt a good deal of secular history, as we may call it, in the Bible, but its importance lies in the fact that, as I have said, it provides the atmosphere and the background for the history of revelation. It is of interest to trace the growth and fortunes of the Hebrew people

just as it is to follow the development of Greece or Rome; and the Old Testament supplies us with much material for that purpose. But we ought not to put the emphasis there, it should be placed rather on the spiritual truth and life which flow along this channel. And the history is unique. We ought not to doubt that in other religions than Judaism or Christianity there has been a real activity of the Holy Spirit. The more triumphantly sure we are that our own religion is supreme, the more generous we can afford to be in our recognition of other religions. But since for us Christianity is the absolute religion, while the religion of Israel is the Divinely ordered preparation for it, the literature which conveys to us the knowledge of God's supreme self-manifestation must outweigh in religious value all other literature.

But while this primary character of the Bible must be placed in the forefront and its significance stated and restated, that some sense of it may be communicated to those who find it difficult to divest themselves of an old view and adjust themselves to a new, I have no desire to forget the other features of Scripture which confer upon it much of its value. In the first place I would put the fact that it is so rich in immediate spiritual nourishment. Large tracts of Scripture may seem to be barren of all religious nutriment, though from our more adequate conception of it we can now see the place they fill in a record of revelation. But there is very much in the Bible which can be at once appropriated by those who read it without any historical imagination. It is true, indeed, that they miss not a little even in spiritual edification through this lack; but it has been wisely ordained that a great deal should lie on the surface ready to be apprehended by the least instructed. There is much that is time-

less in Scripture, much that is not limited by local or racial conditions, which in every age and under every sky utters its direct message to the spirit of man. And these universal and eternal utterances embrace some of those elements in Scripture which are intrinsically most precious. No doubt even these gems sparkle with brighter lustre for those who can place them in their historical setting, while they are also able as they excavate below the surface to bring many a hidden jewel to light. This quality in Scripture is largely given to it by the range of subjects which we find in it. It has a universality like that of Shakespeare, appealing to every emotion, reflecting every situation. It has a message for all our moods, an answer to our deepest perplexities, a response to our sorest needs. It meets us at levels of our being which other literature cannot touch, it lends our spirits wings that we may soar to heights which would otherwise be unreached. And when we are neither mounting upwards on flights of ecstasy, nor in the gloomy valley of depression, but moving on the somewhat weary path of everyday life, it is our intimate companion, relieving the tedious monotony of the way, cheering and strengthening us when we faint beneath the burden we are called to bear.

And the Bible does all this largely in virtue of what may be called its emotional value. This is a quality that is possessed by some of our hymns, which would not bear a strict interpretation from a prosaic point of view, but which nevertheless make a most powerful impression upon us. We sing for example :

> Oh tell of His might,
> Oh sing of His grace,

Whose robe is the light,
Whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath
The deep thunder-clouds form,
And dark is His path
On the wings of the storm.

The language is not patient of exact scientific analysis, but no one I hope would argue that it is therefore unfit for use in Christian worship. As I have pointed out elsewhere the language is mythical in origin, but the myth has faded into poetry.[1] No one would be so prosaic as to interpret the writer to mean that the dense thunder-cloud was really the chariot on which God was conveyed. But how profoundly the words move us as we sing them in the great congregation! Their value consists in the frame of mind which they induce rather than in any intellectual statement as to the Divine mode of action. And this is characteristic of not a little which we find in Scripture. No one but a dull pedant or an unimaginative literalist would insist that language of this kind was a contribution to Systematic Theology. Every one else would see that here we have to do with poetry, the value of which was to be sought in the emotional response that it evoked in the reader. It is from this standpoint that we may rightly estimate the value conferred on the Bible by its literary character. I have already said that its main importance is not to be found here but rather in its spiritual and moral quality. But the literary element is important just because the fit expression adds so immeasurably to the power with which the subject-matter appeals to us. There are many passages in Scripture whose spell over us would be completely broken were they

[1] *Faded Myths*, pp. 5–8.

to be so rewritten that while the ideas remained the same the expression was changed into pedestrian prose. The doctrine of verbal inspiration is to be heartily repudiated, but it would be a great mistake to suppose that inspiration does not affect the choice of words. It does not convey the idea and leave the expression untouched; but the elevation of the spirit which the writer experiences not only fills his soul with great thoughts, but enables him to clothe the thoughts in perfectly fit language.

From these general observations on the value of Scripture I pass on to speak of the value which attaches to the Old Testament in particular.[1]

Probably many Christians have been tempted to suppose that it would have been better for the Church if she had broken loose from the religion of Israel altogether and abandoned the Old Testament to the Synagogue. There were those in the second century who took that view, and it is not difficult to sympathize with some of the motives which impelled them to it. I believe, however, that the Church was Divinely guided in the resolve to keep the Old Testament as part of her sacred literature, though few would deny that she has not been wholly successful in escaping the perils involved in her choice. Yet it was not for a very long time that she became clearly aware, if indeed she has even yet understood the significance of that action wherein she builded better than she knew. Too often the meaning of the Old Testament has been largely missed because its readers have insisted on the anachronism of carrying back the Gospel into the religion of Israel. The great signifi-

[1] The Section on the Old Testament which follows (pp. 483–491) was read as a paper at the National Free Church Council held at Leeds in 1907.

cance of the earlier literature has been supposed to lie in the presentation of the Gospel in type, in symbol, and prophecy. This seems to me a hopeless line on which to defend the value of the Old Testament for ourselves to-day. For if the main drift of the earlier literature is that it said in an obscure and round-about way what is expressed in the New Testament in a plain and direct way it seems to follow that the New Testament largely supersedes the Old. When that which is perfect is come that which is in part has been done away. What measure of truth underlies this description of the Old Testament I need not inquire, but in dwelling on the place of the Old Testament in the religious life of to-day it is obvious that we must present it in some other light than to say that the Old Testament is simply the New Testament in hieroglyphics.

At the outset we ought frankly to recognize the limitations of the Old Testament, a duty imposed upon us not simply by fidelity to patent facts but by the example of our Lord. That the Old Testament represents a lower religious stage than the New Testament, that it is marred by outbursts of ferocity, of national and even personal hate, by vindictiveness, and intolerance, ought to be confessed without reserve. But in justice we ought to remember how much can be said on the other side, even with reference to those qualities where the literature is most vulnerable. Had we taken the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount to heart, the defects of the Old Testament would have caused us no trouble. That it does not stand upon the level of the Gospel ought to be a commonplace rather than a paradox. At its very best it is true it rises to the New Testament level, in Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant, in the description of

the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, in the Book of Jonah, in some of the Psalms such as the 51st and 73rd. But this wide range of diversity reminds us how difficult it is to speak of the Old Testament as a whole, to construct a formula for example which shall embrace the Book of Jonah at one end of the scale and the Book of Esther at the other. It would be foolish to seek in this large literature for a spiritual or ethical uniformity. Whatever theories people may hold, their practice clearly proclaims their conviction that it is not equally authoritative and helpful throughout. Now as we shall see this does not mean that the less directly helpful portions ought not to be there at all, it means that we must not misunderstand the purpose for which they are included. And it is specially necessary for us to remember this in view of the progress of modern knowledge. We must try to throw the emphasis in the right place and to put the Old Testament where the progress of physical science, literary criticism or historical research cannot nullify the claims that we make for it.

Why then do we believe that the Old Testament with all its limitations still remains precious to us who live in the clear sunlight of the Gospel? First of all because the New Testament itself would be largely unintelligible apart from the Old. It everywhere pre-supposes the Old Testament, builds upon the foundation it had laid, speaks to a people who had been trained by it. Jesus Himself stood in the succession of the Prophets. He summed up in Himself all the religious meaning of Israel as the revealer of God to the world. He transcended indeed the national limitations of His race and became the great Prophet of the world, but His work was rooted in the Old Testament and would have been impossible without it.

And how are we to understand the theology of Paul or the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews without reference to that Old Testament literature in which their heart and intellect had been steeped? Further, we cannot forget that Christianity is itself the culmination of the religion of the Old Testament. It is true that the old argument from prophecy is largely obsolete, partly because the centre of gravity in apologetics has shifted from external credentials to intrinsic worth, and partly because the propounders of that argument could not see the wood for the trees. But in a larger sense the earlier revelation is a prophecy of Christ since it moves forward to Him so steadily as its goal. It further becomes a very important element in Apologetics to trace the history of Hebrew religion and show how the trend of it pointed inevitably to the Gospel. Once more there is much in the Old Testament that we do not find in the New. Just in virtue of the fact that the New Testament writers pre-suppose the Old, a great deal is omitted that must have been included had they been building from the foundations. Much in the Prophets for example, especially in their treatment of social questions, remains of permanent importance to ourselves, at any rate in the ideals and principles by which they were animated if not in the precise applications which they made to the conditions of their own time. Or again the New Testament has nothing corresponding to the Book of Psalms or the Book of Job. Moreover, we cannot forget our Lord's own attitude to the Old Testament. It was discriminating and free it is true, but it was also reverent and sympathetic. To it He turned for solace and spiritual refreshment and with it He repelled the temptations that assailed Him.

Perhaps the value of the Old Testament will become clearer to us if I now turn to speak of its positive qualities. We cannot lay too much stress on the fact that revelation was a process in history, that it was everywhere in the closest contact with life. This helps us to avoid certain difficulties which are often experienced. I have already said that there is much in the Old Testament which does not minister directly to our spiritual needs and which may not be authoritative for our theology. But it is nevertheless rightly included in the Bible, for we were not intended to use Scripture simply as a collection of detached utterances, every one of which must have an immediate message of God to the soul. There is much in the Old Testament that would satisfy this test, there is much, however, which would not satisfy it. We need to gain a conception that shall find a place for those parts of Scripture which do not lend themselves to immediate edification. And we gain this when we remember that the vital thing is not to understand this or that section which speaks directly to us but to understand the Old Testament as a whole, as a great record of God's revealing and redeeming activity in Israel. Everywhere the Old Testament is in intimate touch with life. It is vivid and concrete in the highest degree. Hence the historical books, even where they deal with purely secular matters and convey no special message, are yet of great value for our conception of the whole. They supply the necessary atmosphere and background in which we see revelation at work. Even those parts of the Old Testament which seem to us most in conflict with the temper of the Gospel may have their right to a place in Scripture vindicated from this point of view. What, for example, are we to make of the Book of

Ecclesiastes? Some would say it is in the Old Testament, therefore it cannot give us a false view of life, and an orthodox meaning would be put into it by exegetical violence. Others would say its teaching is radically false, therefore it ought not to be in the Old Testament. I agree with neither. In spite of qualities that compel our admiration the book presents a view of existence fundamentally incompatible with Christianity. It is not true that life is vanity and striving after wind, that progress is a delusion, that man dies like the beasts, that the knowledge by which men might order their lives aright has been withheld by God, that existence is an evil which may be palliated but cannot be cured. And yet the Old Testament, from my point of view, would be distinctly impoverished by the omission of the book from the Canon. It sets before us possibilities in Judaism which we ought not to ignore and helps us to realize more intensely how great was the urgency that the Saviour should come. Take Christ from the world, and Ecclesiastes describes with clear-sighted despair what for many of us existence would mean. This, it is true, is an extreme case, but it helps us to a more adequate sense of what the Old Testament is, the record of the spiritual history of the Hebrew people.

The Old Testament then is the precipitate of a great religious experience. It came through a people which combined in a unique degree a genius for religion with a passion for righteousness. It worshipped a God who counted all religion as vain which was not penetrated throughout with an enthusiasm for conduct. It fused religion and ethics, those elements so often disjoined, into an inseparable unity. It gave the sanction of religion to the loftiest morality in a way hitherto unknown. Not untruly has it

been said that in matters of religion the Hebrews appear among the peoples of antiquity as a sober man among drunkards. And their religious development was guided and inspired by a series of teachers who stand alone in the history of our race. We can watch the religion grow under the hands of its great leaders: the Titanic figure of Moses who created the nation and the religion; the rugged Elijah with his wrathful protest alike against the worship of the Tyrian Baal and the judicial murder of Naboth; Amos the prophet of a righteousness so inflexible that the nation must be sacrificed to its vindication; the broken-hearted Hosea who through the love that rose above contempt and injury learnt to understand the love that would not give Israel up; Isaiah with his thought of God's holiness and majesty, of the judgment that must come upon the sinful people, and of the righteous remnant under its Messianic King; Jeremiah the greatest of them all who by his doctrine of the New Covenant transformed the very conception of religion; Ezekiel with his doctrine of God's glory to which the whole course of history is made subservient; the Second Isaiah with his wonderful interpretation of Israel as the Servant of Yahweh who proclaimed the true God to the world and suffered for the sin of the heathen; the author of the Book of Jonah with his matchless proclamation of God's all-embracing love; the thinker who wrestled with the dark problem of evil and uttered his thoughts in one of the great poems of the world; the Psalmists who took the teaching of the Prophets and enshrined it in their moving and inspiring lyrics. And as we thus learn to know the life-history of the religion the Old Testament becomes a new book to us. We do not restrict our reading to this or that favourite por-

tion, we recognize that even more important is it to understand these as parts of a mightier whole. It is not a system of theology, an ordered and coherent statement of the lofty truths about God and man, but something far better than that. It is a great collection of the testimonies of experts on the deep things of God, and it shows us revelation at work not in a restricted area but on a vast national scale.

And while the development is intensely human it is not exclusively such. There must have been features in Israel which led God to choose it as the fittest vehicle of His revelation. And yet Israel alone would have been unequal to the task. It thought of its own religion as resting on a Covenant between God and the nation. The action of the living God was realized throughout and with peculiar vividness by its great spiritual leaders. When we think of the theatre on which its history was enacted, when we remember the great critical events through which the people came to a deeper and deeper apprehension of God's nature and His ways, the impression is borne in upon us that here we have something for the creation of which mere flesh and blood even at its best is inadequate. Here the God who is never absent from history strikes into its stream with an intenser energy. And thus even for us of the New Testament His Word lives on in the Old with a vitality and power that could belong to no mere human utterances. As we ponder these ancient writings we feel across all the gulf of centuries, amid conditions so utterly different, that quality within them which speaks to our inmost heart. Their unshrinking application of morality, not simply to individual but to social and to political affairs, their unwavering faith in the triumph of the Kingdom of God, the disinterested

piety which sought God for Himself alone and conceived fellowship with Him to be man's highest good, rebuke our own opportunism, our despair, our selfish religionism. And how inexpressibly precious the great passages remain! The noble rhetoric in which they are written stirs and thrills us as no other literature can, and in seasons of great spiritual emotion and stress there are no words like the dear familiar words to express with perfect adequacy the thoughts and feelings which lie too deep for any poor words of our own.

We cannot then eliminate the Old Testament from our religious life and feel that the New makes it superfluous for us. We ought not to love it less than our predecessors, though we should love it more wisely by frank recognition of its limitations and especially by laying stress upon its meaning as a whole. It will be a happier augury of the enrichment and deepening of the religious life in our Churches when it shall be the aim of our teachers to see that the meaning of this great religious movement which gave Israel all its significance for the world's history is clearly understood, at least in its main outline, by all who have any claim to a religious education.

After what has been said in earlier chapters it might seem to be unnecessary to add anything on the religious value of the New Testament. In the chapter on 'History as a Channel of Revelation' I have given a brief estimate of what Jesus brought, not only in His teaching but in Himself and His work. I have also explained why it was necessary that the Acts and the Epistles should be included in order that we might see how the revelation He brought and the redemption He achieved entered into and moulded history and were thus tested not merely as theory

but in practical life. The interpretation is an integral part of the revelation, which was not Jesus of Nazareth simply as He lived and died but Jesus as He was interpreted by those who were conscious how He had transformed human lives, who were assured that He reigned at God's right hand, and that all power was given unto Him in Heaven and on earth. And in particular I have tried to show (Chap. XIV.) that the Pauline theology sprang in the main from Paul's experience and comes to us with the guarantee which such an origin carries with it.

I have also spoken (Chap. XVII.) on the question whether the teaching of Paul is out of harmony with the teaching of Jesus, and have given reasons for supposing that, even where the two do not coincide, the Pauline theology is in its main lines a legitimate development of elements which were present in the teaching of Jesus; that the theology of the primitive Church had already moved in this direction; and that the problem of which Paulinism was a solution was necessarily pushed to the front by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Nevertheless the question still remains whether Paulinism can be accepted as true. We do not require to prove that we can carry it back to the teaching of Christ in order to defend its genuinely Christian character, but we need something more than a proof that it can be reconciled with the teaching of the Founder to assure us that it is true. For good or ill our evangelical theology has been so constructed on the lines of Paul that to eliminate the Pauline element would empty it of much of its meaning and vital force. Such an attempt would, I am convinced, be a fatal mistake. I believe that Paulinism is destined to be a permanent factor in Christianity, and that the way to rectify our theology

is not by casting it aside, but by a deeper and more thorough understanding of it.

It is not necessary, I think, to argue for the truth of all the opinions expressed in the Epistles. The Apostle was a child of his age and in his case as in that of others the intellectual and religious environment played its part. It could not in the nature of the case be otherwise. It lent indeed much of its immediate value to Paul's teaching. For ourselves, whose conditions of thought and life are so widely different, the elements borrowed from the environment are naturally of less value. But this ought not to disturb us. For what we should seek in Scripture is the satisfaction of our permanent human needs, rather than truth adjusted to our passing modes of thought. And Paul certainly stands this test very well. He was unquestionably influenced by his Jewish training, and brought over into his Christian theology elements derived from Pharisaism. But I venture to say that these are secondary in his theology, influencing his modes of argument and outlying provinces of his thought rather than those central doctrines which constitute what we call Paulinism. And we must not forget that even this environment had its place in the providence of God.

It is also not surprising that the style of his Epistles and their scholasticism are responsible for much of the neglect or cold dislike with which he has been treated. It is not to be wondered at that some of his chapters, with their difficult and subtle arguments, repel many readers. But Paul must not be blamed because he was so brilliant a dialectician. The current of his reasoning often does not move with such shallow lucidity that its meaning lies on the surface. Such is the nimbleness and speed of his thought and such its

depth that we must count continually on an obscurity which baffles us, unless we are prepared to spend much sweat of brain in the effort to understand him, and on a swift logic which leaps from point to point often with but scanty clues to guide those, who are painfully tracking his progress, as to the intermediate links. If we find him hard to follow, we must remember not only that the web of his argument is of a complicated pattern, but that the circumstances with which he had to deal are not easily intelligible to us. If we could put ourselves in the place of his opponents, we should be in a better position to estimate the value of his discussions. But it is a mistake to judge Paul by his scholasticism. To the dialecticians he became a dialectician. He could Rabbinise on occasion with the best of them. Yet even his Rabbinism was not the hair-splitting of the Rabbis. It was never logic for logic's sake, but for the sake of some precious and vital truth. But he was most himself when he had left all controversy behind him and soared up on the wings of an inspired eloquence into the clear sky of God's unclouded truth. His was not that arid type of intellect which sees nothing in heaven and earth but what it can grasp in its own weak and tiny grip. With all the bold flight of his speculation he never forgot that beyond all he knew stretched the illimitable mystery of God's eternal will. And so it was for him most characteristic that after his famous discussion of the mystery of national election and apparent rejection he should conclude the discussion, which has been the battlefield of contending theologians, with that magnificent passage beginning: 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past

tracing out!' He never lost the sense of mystery and awe.

But we are met by a further objection, that the advance of modern knowledge has definitely disproved the historical character of the fact on which Paul's system rests. Science and historical criticism alike have discredited the truth of the story of Adam. And this is supposed to be fatal to Paul's theology, cutting away the basis of his doctrine not merely of sin but also of salvation. It is rather difficult to take this so seriously as it is meant, for it is quite evident to students of Paul that his system is not bound up with the historical character of the story of the Garden of Eden. I do not lay stress on the fact that the doctrine occurs only incidentally in the Epistles, for it seems to me clear that it had an important place in the Apostle's theology. But it was not so much historical as psychological. Of course it never occurred to him to doubt the historical truth of the story; it is all the more remarkable that his doctrine was so constructed as to be really independent of it. He had little interest in the historical Adam, but in the psychological or theological Adam he was deeply interested. Adam was to him the race as left to itself; his act was a racial act, and except as racial had no significance. It was the act in which the whole character of the race found its expression, and according to which it was judged guilty by God. And therefore the precise historical expression which this universal racial character received is a matter of complete indifference. Whenever the dawning moral consciousness of man realized the existence of a moral law, and his own disharmony with it, then what Paul says of Adam really took place. So far then is it from being true that Paul's doctrine of salvation stands or falls

with the historical character of the third chapter of Genesis, that not even his doctrine of sin depends upon it. He came to both by quite another road.[1]

At this point one may appropriately call attention to the modernness of Paul. Stress is laid to-day on our solidarity, but this idea dominates much of the theology of Paul. It finds expression in his interpretation of the acts of Adam and Christ as racial acts; in his great doctrine that we are all members one of another, and that if one member suffers the whole body suffers with it. And along with this goes his enthusiasm for humanity, and his feeling that even the most radical distinctions of race and culture, yes, and the darker and deeper passion of religious hate, have been cancelled by the Cross of Christ. An age such as ours, which still lags so far behind his thought and feeling, is not in a position to scoff at his antiquated teaching. Indeed our age, which so emphasises the thought of natural selection, might have been expected to show more sympathy towards a side of Paul's doctrine, which, in spite of much misrepresentation, contains nevertheless, very important truth. I mean his doctrine of election, not indeed as it is often explained, but as he intended it. Nor should we forget how he has laboured to give us a philosophy of history, an ordered conception of God's education of the race.

I pass on to the point frequently urged against Paul, that he was the corrupter of the pure Gospel of Jesus. He, it is said, taught a pure and elevated morality which Paul perverted into a system of theology. One may well ask if those who speak in this way have ever read the Gospels at all. For the striking thing about them is the way in which the loftiest

[1] On the subject of this paragraph see *Christianity: Its Nature and Its Truth*, pp. 117–126.

morality is inextricably associated with the purest religion. The love of God with every faculty of our being is the first and greatest commandment to which the love of our neighbour is made secondary. The Sermon on the Mount, of which some speak as if it were purely a moral code, is full of theology. And in the interests of morality, religion must be insisted on. For a truly moral life it is not teaching that we chiefly need, but power. A course of ethics may be of value to us in the right direction of our lives, but is it not the universal confession that it is not so much a fuller knowledge that we need, but a fuller power to do what we already know? We look around us for a moral dynamic and we find it in religion. It is this which has the power to lift us out of our lower selves, to flush our lives with the glow of achievement otherwise unattainable, to give us the joyful sense of the mastery of evil and victory over the world.

But here religion depends for its efficacy largely upon theology. And this I may illustrate from some of those doctrines of Paul with which so much impatience is manifested. There can be no question that one of the greatest of moral forces has been the personal love of Christians to Christ. This is a fact well attested by many who would not regard themselves as Christians. And if we ask ourselves on what this immeasurable devotion rests, we shall see how much of what may be called the theological element enters into it. Such a doctrine as that of the pre-existence of Christ is often regarded as one of those speculations whose truth or falsehood makes no difference to religion. But really it is not so. How constraining is the appeal of the sacrifice which that doctrine involves! What ground for gratitude and for love we find in the thought of His great self-surrender!

The earthly life of Jesus was in itself most beautiful, but how much more beautiful it becomes to us when we set it against the background of the life in heaven. With what irresistible appeal do those words come to us! 'though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor!' That He humbled Himself even to the death of the Cross claims our admiration, but that this was the act of one who was in the form of God, and chose to empty Himself and be found in fashion as a man, compels not admiration but grateful and adoring love. And such love is among the most powerful forces that can be called to the aid of Christian morality.

Once more, if we believe that the death of Jesus was a martyr's death, we honour Him as we honour many another for His heroic constancy. But if it was for our salvation, the warmest admiration would be a cold return. Again, the aim of religion is unhindered fellowship with God. And for this we need a knowledge of Him. But such a knowledge we could not easily gain. Nature speaks to us with an ambiguous voice, for she is not only the bountiful supplier of our needs, but cruel and relentless, 'red in tooth and claw.' We need an authentic voice from God Himself. And this we have in Jesus, if Paul's doctrine of Him is true. If Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the Son of His love, then in Him we have a manifestation of the character of God, which prepares us for fellowship with Him. And deeper than our ignorance of God lies the hindrance of sin which unfits us for communion with His perfect purity. If then a theology tells us of a means by which this barrier may be removed, this, once more, is a debt which religion owes to it.

For the doctrine of Christ's Divinity Paul is also made responsible, not altogether correctly, it is true.

But here, too, the doctrine has a value for morality. To many it will seem remote from our practical life that we should be carried in thought into the inner life of God, and see the Father in communion with His Eternal Son. And yet it is not so. For God is to us a moral ideal, and as we think of Him so shall we strive to be. And this conception of the Godhead as embracing Son as well as Father gives us a deeper and more ethical conception of God. For it shows that God is no abstract unity, isolated and self-centred, but a higher unity of richer and more complex life, in which there is room for the play of emotion, and in which ethical relations have their home. Thus we find in God not Fatherhood only, but Sonship, not rule and authority only, but the filial obedience which seeks always to do the Father's will. We see love given and love received, and love given back again. Thus the great truth that God is love gains for us a depth of meaning it could not otherwise possess. Thus we know that that which is the highest in ourselves finds its pattern and fullest expression in the life of God. And thus the moral ideal comes to us no longer with the stern face of inflexible and imperious law, but as the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And how welcome is the light which this throws on the darkness of our life, I need hardly point out. For it is our great question, if in spite of everything we may still believe that God is love, and it is the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ which gives us this assurance.

How closely, for Paul, ethics was associated with theology, all who have studied his Epistles with care will know. His central doctrine was that to which he appeals as the spring of true morality. His doctrine of union with Christ in His sufferings, death and resurrection, was of the most mystical character. And

yet he drew from it the most practical conclusions and linked to it the most commonplace duties. The sixth chapter of Romans is the classical example of the way in which he based his ethics on his dogmatics, and solved the problem which had utterly baffled him before his conversion, how he might attain righteousness. It was because he knew himself to be one with Christ that he realized victory over sin, and life in conformity with God's will.

I have already pointed out that Paul's most characteristic teaching is to be explained as the outcome of his own spiritual experience. It may, no doubt, be said that it is therefore marked with his individual limitations. But I would urge on the contrary that the note of personality should be to us the certificate of truth. For though there are not many in whom the experience takes so intense a form, yet in all the need is more or less acutely felt, and for all the remedy is alike of value. His richer experience and deeper, more piercing insight enable us to read more clearly the inner secrets of our own spiritual history. In the battle of faith which rages no longer about the outworks but the fortress of Christianity, we shall be wise if we stake on experience no little of the issue of the fight. For, as I have ventured already to urge, experience has an element of authenticity which guarantees it as few things can be said to be guaranteed.

The great problems with which Paul had to deal were permanent problems, and they are vital to ourselves. No doubt the answer we give to them will depend largely on the attitude we adopt to the Christian facts. To those of us for whom the Christian facts are true the question is urgent—Can we accept the great Apostle's solution? Leaving aside the

question of inspiration and the deference to be paid to an inspired writer, we may lay stress on the witness which Paulinism bears in itself. To put it on no higher ground at present, the teaching of Paul on religion is the teaching of an expert of the highest rank, whose word claims from us at least the deference we pay to that of great masters in science or in art. This, it is true, does not carry us very far towards establishing the validity of his beliefs, but it places us in a proper attitude of respectful attention to what he has to say. This is a great step gained, and those who thus approach the great Apostle may see much in him that the supercilious reader altogether overlooks.

Let us remember how unique was his endowment. He had, to begin with, a deep conviction of sin. It is no accident that some of the greatest religious reformers have passed through this stage. One thinks of Augustine, of Luther, and of Bunyan. He was also by nature deeply concerned for conduct, and his conviction of sin did not spring merely out of dread of God's wrath, but out of the profound consciousness of disharmony with the moral ideal. He had what we may truly call a genius for morality.

But while morality moves in the region of conduct and the will, religion moves in the sphere of emotion. And, inflexible moralist though he was, he was a man of the most marvellous richness and depth of feeling. Only such a man could have borne about unceasing sorrow in his heart for his kinsmen according to the flesh, and have wished himself anathema from Christ for their salvation. All the intense and passionate ardour of love which possessed him was turned in utter devotion towards Christ. With genius for morality he combined a genius for religion of the most transcendent kind.

Yet he was not swept away from sobriety by the flood-tide of feeling which bore him on its bosom. The visionary who was caught into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, the enthusiast who saw in the ecstatic phenomena of the Corinthian Church the gifts of the Spirit and himself spake with tongues more than they all, yet knew how to keep these revelations and gifts in their proper place. It is the almost irresistible temptation of religious leaders, whose career is marked by such phenomena, to set an inordinate value upon them, especially when they are themselves endowed. It is no small tribute to the sanity of Paul's mind that he relegated such things to a position of very slight importance compared with the fundamental graces of faith and love, and that he tested their value not by their extraordinary character but their fitness for edification. It is remarkable that in a time of such spiritual ferment, frail in body, harassed by untiring enemies, troubled by the defection of his converts, stung to the quick by base insinuations, continually founding new churches, with the care of those already founded always pressing on him, he retained his mental balance absolutely unimpaired, organized his churches with consummate skill, and settled their difficulties with unfailing sagacity.

But to this enthusiasm for morality, this passion for religion, this cool practical sagacity, he added a genius for speculation. It touches us with wonder, and at times almost with awe, to see how easily he moves amid the most intricate problems, how sure and steady is his flight in the rarest atmosphere of speculation.

If I have truly described him and rightly indicated the source of his theology we have got beyond the

judgment of him from which we were willing to start, that he was a great expert in religion. His teaching comes to us with the highest credentials that we can expect. But there is one thing more to be said. However high credentials may be they ought not to win assent unless they are ratified by experience. And this test also it satisfies. Not only did the theology take its rise in experience, but its truth is always being verified in new experience, and will, therefore, I believe, continue to be so verified. Deep still calls to deep as his experience is answered in our own.

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